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WORKS

OF

THOMAS CHALMERS, D.D. & LL.D.

PROFESSOR OF THEOLOGY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH,
AND CORRESPONDING MEMBER OF THE ROYAL INSTITUTE OF FRANCE.

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ON

NATURAL THEOLOGY.

BY

THOMAS CHALMERS, D.D. & LL.D.

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BOOK IV.

EVIDENCES FOR A GOD IN THE ADAPTATION OF EXTERNAL NATURE TO THE MENTAL CONSTITUTION OF MAN.

CHAPTER I.

On the General Adaptation of External Nature to the Moral Constitution of Man.

1. It needs but a cursory observation of life to be made sensible, that man has not been endowed with a conscience, without, at the same time, being placed in a theatre which afforded the most abundant scope and occasion for its exercise. The truth is, that, in the multitude of fellow-beings by whom he is surrounded, and in the manifold variety of his social and family relations, there is a perpetual call on his sense of right and wrong—insomuch, that to the doings of every hour throughout his waking existence, one or other of these moral designations is applicable. It might have been stigmatized as the example of a mal-adjustment in the circumstances of our species, had man been provided with a waste feeling or a waste faculty, which remained dormant and unemployed from the want of counterpart objects that were suited to it. The wisdom of God admits of glorious vindication

against any such charge in the physical department of our nature, where the objective and subjective have been made so marvellously to harmonize with each other; there being, in the material creation, sights of infinitely varied loveliness, and sounds of as varied melody, and many thousand tastes and odours of exquisite gratification, and distinctions innumerable of touch and feeling, to meet the whole compass and diversity of the human senses—multiplying without end, both the notice that we receive from external things, and the enjoyments that we derive from them. And as little in the moral department of our nature, is any of its faculties, and more especially the great and master faculty of all, left to languish from the want of occupation. The whole of life, in fact, is crowded with opportunities for its employment—or, rather, instead of being represented as the subject of so many distinct and ever-recurring calls, conscience may well be represented as the constant guide and guardian of human life; and, for the right discharge of this its high office, as being kept on the alert perpetually. The creature on whom conscience hath laid the obligation of refraining from all mischief, and rendering to society all possible good, lives under a responsibility which never for a single moment is suspended. He may be said to possess a continuity of moral being; and morality whether of a good or evil hue, tinges the whole current of his history. It is a thing of constancy as well as a thing of frequency—for, even when not carried forth into action, it is not dormant; but possesses the mind in the form of a cherished purpose or

cherished principle, or, as the Romans expressed it, of a perpetual will either to that which is good or evil. But over and above this, the calls to action are innumerable. In the wants of others; in their powers of enjoyment; in their claims on our equity, our protection, or our kindness; in the various openings and walks of usefulness; in the services which even the humblest might render to those of their own family, or household, or country; in the application, of that comprehensive precept, to do good unto all men as we have opportunity—we behold a prodigious number and diversity of occasions for the exercise of moral principle. It is possible that the lessons of a school may not be arduous enough nor diversified enough for the capacity of a learner. But this cannot be affirmed of that school of discipline, alike arduous and unremitting, to which the great Author of our being hath introduced us. Along with the moral capacity by which He hath endowed us, He hath provided a richly furnished gymnasium for its exercises and its trials—where we may earn, if not the triumphs of virtue, at least some delicious foretastes of that full and final blessedness for which the scholarship of human life, with its manifold engagements and duties, is so obviously fitted to prepare us.

2. But let us now briefly state the adaptation of external nature to the moral constitution of man, with a reference to that three-fold generality which we have already expounded.* We have spoken of the supremacy of conscience, and of the inherent

* Book. III. Chapters ii., iii. & iv.

pleasures and pains of virtue and vice, and of the law and operation of habit—as forming three distinct arguments for the moral goodness of Him, who hath so constructed our nature, that by its workings alone, man should be so clearly and powerfully warned to a life of righteousness—should in the native and immediate joys of rectitude, earn so precious a reward—and, finally, should be led onward to such a state of character, in respect of its confirmed good or confirmed evil, as to afford one of the likeliest prognostications which nature offers to our view of an immortality beyond the grave, where we shall abundantly reap the consequence of our present doings, in either the happiness of established virtue, or the utter wretchedness and woe of our then inveterate depravity. But hitherto we have viewed this nature of man, rather as an individual and insulated constitution, than as a mechanism acted upon by any forces or influences from without. It is in this latter aspect that we are henceforth to regard it; it being the proper design of the Book on which we have entered to state the adaptations of the objective to the subjective, or of external nature to the mental constitution of man. It should be recollected, however,* that in our view of external nature, we comprehend, not merely all that is external to the world of mind—for this would restrict us to the consideration of those reciprocal actings which take place between mind and matter. We further comprehend all that is external to one individual

* See Introductory Chapter, 1, 2, 3.

mind, and therefore the other minds which are around it; and so, as pregnant with the evidence of a divine wisdom, it is our part to unfold the actings and reactings that take place between man and man in society.

3. And first, in regard to the power and sensibility of conscience, there is a most important influence brought to bear on each individual possessor of this faculty from without, and by his fellow men. It will help us to understand it aright, if we reflect on a felt and familiar experience of all men—even the effect of a very slight notice, often of a single word, from one of our companions, to recall some past scene or transaction of our lives, which had long vanished from our remembrance; and would, but for this reawakening, have remained in deep oblivion to the end of our days. The phenomenon can easily be explained by the laws of suggestion. Our wonted trains of thought might never have conducted the mind to any thought or recollection of the event in question—whereas, on the occurrence of even a very partial intimation, all the associated circumstances come into vivid recognition; and we are transported back again to the departed realities of former years, that had lain extinct within us for so long a period, and might have been extinct for ever, if not lighted up again by an extraneous application. How many are the days since early boyhood, of which not one trace or vestige now abides upon the memory. Yet perhaps there is not one of these days, the history of which could not be recalled, by means of some such external or foreign

help to the remembrance of it. Let us imagine for example, that a daily companion had, unknown to us, kept a minute and statistical journal of all the events we personally shared in; and the likelihood is, that, if admitted to the perusal of this document, even after the lapse of half a lifetime, our memory would depone to many thousand events which had else escaped, into utter and irrecoverable forgetfulness. It is certainly remarkable, that, on some brief utterance by another, the stories of former days should suddenly reappear, as if in illumined characters, on the tablet from which they had so totally faded; that the mention of a single circumstance, if only the link of a train, should conjure to life again a whole host of sleeping recollections: and so, in each of our fellow-men, might we have a remembrancer, who can vivify our consciousness anew, respecting scenes and transactions of our former history which had long gone by; and which, after having vanished once from a solitary mind left to its own processes, would have vanished everlastingly.

4. It is thus, that, not only can one man make instant translation of his own memory; but on certain subjects, he can even make instant translation of his own intelligence into the mind of another. A shrewd discerner of the heart, when laying open its heretofore unrevealed mysteries, makes mention of things which at the moment we feel to be novelties; but which, almost at the same moment, are felt and recognised by us as truths—and that, not because we receive them upon his authority, but on the independent view

that ourselves have of their own evidence. His utterance, in fact, has evoked from the cell of their imprisonment, remembrances, which but for him, might never have been awakened; and which, when thus summoned into existence, are so many vouchers for the perfect wisdom and truth of what he tells. A thousand peculiarities of life and character, till then unnoticed, are no sooner heard by us, although for the first time in our lives, than they shine before the mind's eye, in the light of a satisfying demonstration. And the reason is, that the materials of their proof have been actually stored up within us, by the history and experience of former years, though in chambers of forgetfulness—whence, however, they are quickly and vividly called forth, as if with the power of a talisman, by the voice of him, who no sooner announces his proposition, than he suggests the by-gone recollections of our own which serve to confirm it. The pages of the novelist, or the preacher, or the moral essayist, though all of them should deal in statements alone, without the formal allegation of evidence, may be informed throughout with evidence, notwithstanding; and that, because each of them speaks to the consciousness of his readers, unlocking a treasury of latent recollections, which no sooner start again into being, than they become witnesses for the sagacity and admirable sense of him with whom all this luminous and satisfying converse is held. It is like the holding up of a mirror, or the response of an echo to a voice. What the author discovers, the reader promptly and presently discerns. The one utters new

things; but that light of immediate manifestation in which the other beholds them, is struck out of old materials which himself too had long since appropriated, but laid up in a dormitory, where they might have slumbered for ever—had it not been for that voice which charmed them anew into life and consciousness. This is the only way in which the instant recognition of truths before unheard of and unknown, can possibly be explained. It is because their evidence lies enveloped in the reminiscences of other days, which had long passed into oblivion; but are again presented to the notice of the mind by the power of association.

5. This is properly a case of intellectual rather than of moral adaptation; and is only now adverted to for the purpose of illustration. For a decayed conscience is susceptible of like resuscitation with a decayed memory. In treating of the effects of habit, we briefly noticed the gradual weakening of conscience, as the indulgences of vice were persisted in. Its remonstrances, however ineffectual, may, at the first, have had a part in that train of thought and feeling, which commences with a temptation, and is consummated in guilt; but in proportion to the frequency, wherewith the voice of conscience is hushed, or overborne, or refused entertainment by the mind, in that proportion does it lift a feebler and a fainter voice afterwards—till at length it may come to be unheard; and any suggestions from this faculty may either pass unheeded, or perhaps drop out of the train altogether. It is thus that many a foul or horrid immorality may come at length to be perpetrated without

the sense or feeling of its enormity. Conscience, with the repeated stiflings it has undergone, may as if on the eve of extinction, have ceased from its exercises. This moral insensibility forms, in truth, one main constituent in the hardihood of crime. The conscience is cradled into a state of stupefaction; and the criminal, now a desperado in guilt, may prosecute his secret depravities, with no relentings from within, and no other dread upon his spirit, than that of discovery by his fellow-men.

6. And it is on the event of such discovery, that we meet with the phenomenon in question. When that guilt, to which he had himself become so profoundly insensible, is at length beheld in the light of other minds—it is then that the scales are made to fall from the eyes of the offender; and he, as if suddenly awoke from lethargy, stands aghast before the spectacle of his own worthlessness. It is not the shame of detection, nor the fear of its consequences, which forms the whole of this distress. These may aggravate the suffering; but they do not altogether compose it—for often besides, is there a resurrection of the moral sensibilities within the bosom of the unhappy criminal, as if relumed at the touch of sympathy, with the pronounced judgments and feelings of other men. When their unperverted and unwarped consciences, because free from the delusions which encompass his own, give forth a righteous sentence—they enlist his conscience upon their side, which then reasserts its power, and again speaks to him in a voice of thunder. When that continuous train between the first excitement of some guilty passion,

and its final gratification, from which the suggestions of the moral faculty had been so carefully excluded, is thus arrested and broken—then does conscience, as if emancipated from a spell, at times recover from the infatuation which held it; and utter reproaches of its own, more terrible to the sinner's heart, than all the execrations of general society. And whatever shall forcibly terminate the guilty indulgence, may, by interrupting the accustomed series of thoughts and purposes and passions, also dissipate and put an end to the inveteracy of this moral or spiritual blindness. The confinement of a prison-house may do it. The confinement of a death-bed may do it. And accordingly, on these occasions, does conscience, after an interval it would seem, not of death but only of suspended animation, come forth with the might of an avenger, and make emphatic representation of her wrongs.

7. But this influence which we have attempted to exhibit in bold relief, by means of rare and strong exemplification, is in busy and perpetual operation throughout society—and that, more to prevent crime than to punish it; rather, to maintain the conscience in freshness and integrity, than to reanimate it from a state of decay, or to recall its aberrations. Indeed its restorative efficacy, though far more striking, is not so habitual, nor in the whole amount so salutary, as its counteractive efficacy. The truth is, that we cannot frequent the companionships of human life, without observing the constant circulation and reciprocal play of the moral judgments among men —with whom there is not a more favourite or familiar exercise, than that of discussing the conduct and

pronouncing on the deserts of each other. It is thus that every individual, liable in his own case to be misled or blinded by the partialities of interest and passion, is placed under the observation and guardianship of his fellows—who, exempted from his personal or particular bias, give forth a righteous sentence and cause it to be heard. A pure moral light is by this means kept up in society, composed of men whose thoughts are ever employed in "accusing or else excusing one another"—so that every individual conscience receives an impulse and a direction from sympathy with the consciences around it. We are aware that the love of applause intervenes at this point as a distinct and auxiliary influence. But the primary influence is a moral one. Each man lives under a consciousness of the vigilant and discerning witnesses who are on every side of him; and his conscience, kept on the alert and kept in accordance with theirs, acts both more powerfully and more purely, than if left to the decay and the self-deception of its own withering solitude. The lamp which might have waxed dim by itself, revives its fading lustre, by contact and communication with those which burn more brightly in other bosoms than its own; and this law of interchange between mind and mind, forms an important adaptation in the mechanism of human society.

8. But, to revert for a moment to the revival of conscience after that its sensibilities had become torpid for a season; and they are quickened anew, as if by sympathy, with the moral judgments of other men. This phenomenon of conscience seems

to afford another glimpse or indication of futurity. It at least tells with what facility that Being, who hath all the resources of infinity at command, could, and that by an operation purely mental, inflict the vengeance of a suffering the most exquisite, on the children of disobedience. He has only to re-open the fountains of memory and conscience; and this will of itself cause distillation within the soul of the waters of bitterness. And if in the voice of earthly remembrancers and earthly judges, we observe such a power of re-awakening—we might infer, not the possibility alone, but the extreme likelihood of a far more vivid re-awakening, when the offended lawgiver himself takes the judgment into His own hands. If the rebuke of human tongues and human eyes be of such force to revive the sleeping agony within us, what may we not feel, when the adverse sentence is pronounced against us from the throne of God, and in the midst of a universal theatre? If, in this our little day, the condemnation is felt to be insupportable, that twinkles upon us from the thousand secondary and subordinate lustres by which we are surrounded —what must it be, when He, by whose hand they have all been lighted up, turns towards us the strength of His own countenance; and, with His look of reprobation sends forth trouble and dismay over the hosts of the rebellious.*

* Dr. Abercromby, in his interesting work on the intellectual powers, states some remarkable cases of resuscitated and enlarged memory, which remind one of the explanation given by Mr. Coleridge of the opening of the books in the day of judgment. It is on the opening of the book of conscience that the sinner is made to feel the truth and righteousness of his condemnation.

9. But besides the pleasures and pains of conscience, there is, in the very taste and feeling of moral qualities, a pleasure or a pain. This formed our second general argument in favour of God's righteous administration;* and our mental constitution, even when viewed singly, furnishes sufficient materials on which to build it. But the argument is greatly strengthened and enhanced by the adaptation to that constitution of external nature, more especially as exemplified in the reciprocal influences which take place between mind and mind in society: for the effect of this adaptation is to multiply both the pleasures of virtue and the sufferings of vice. The first, the original pleasure, is that which is felt by the virtuous man himself; as, for example, by the benevolent, in the very sense and feeling of that kindness whereby his heart is actuated. The second is felt by him who is the object of this kindness—for merely in the conscious possession of another's good will, there is a great and distinct enjoyment. And then the manifested kindness of the former awakens gratitude in the bosom of the latter; and this, too, is a highly pleasurable emotion. And lastly, gratitude sends back a delicious incense to the benefactor who awakened it. By the purely mental interchange of these affections there is generated a prodigious amount of happiness; and that, altogether independent of the gratifications which are yielded by the material gifts of liberality on the one hand, or by the material services of gratitude on the other. Insomuch, that we have

* Book III. Chap. iii.

only to imagine a reign of perfect virtue; and then, in spite of the physical ills which essentially and inevitably attach to our condition, we should feel as if we had approximated very nearly to a state of perfect enjoyment among men—or, in other words, that the bliss of paradise would be almost fully realized upon earth, were but the moral graces and charities of paradise firmly established there, and in full operation. Let there be honest and universal good-will in every bosom, and this be responded to from all who are the objects of it by an honest gratitude back again; let kindness, in all its various effects and manifestations, pass and repass from one heart and countenance to another; let there be a universal courteousness in our streets, and let fidelity and affection and all the domestic virtues take up their secure and lasting abode in every family; let the succour and sympathy of a willing neighbourhood be ever in readiness to meet and to overpass all the want and wretchedness to which humanity is liable; let truth, and honour, and inviolable friendship between man and man, banish all treachery and injustice from the world; in the walks of merchandise, let an unfailing integrity on the one side, have the homage done to it of unbounded confidence on the other—insomuch, that each man reposing with conscious safety on the uprightness and attachment of his fellow, and withal rejoicing as much in the prosperity of an acquaintance, as he should in his own, there would come to be no place for the harassments and the heart-burnings of mutual suspicion or resentment or envy:

who does not see, in the state of a society thus constituted and thus harmonized, the palpable evidence of a nature so framed, that the happiness of the world and the righteousness of the world kept pace the one with the other? And it is all-important to remark of this happiness, that, in respect both to quality and amount, it mainly consists of moral elements—so that while every giver who feels as he ought, experiences a delight in the exercise of generosity which rewards him a hundred-fold for all its sacrifices; every receiver who feels as he ought, rejoices infinitely more in the sense of the benefactor's kindness, than in the physical gratification or fruit of the benefactor's liberality. It is saying much for the virtuousness of Him who hath so moulded and so organized the spirit of man, that, apart from sense and from all its satisfactions, but from the ethereal play of the good affections alone, the highest felicity of our nature should be generated; that, simply by the interchange of cordiality between man and man, and one benevolent emotion re-echoing to another, there should be yielded to human hearts, so much of the truth and substance of real enjoyment—so that did justice, and charity, and holiness, descend from heaven to earth, taking full and universal possession of our species, the happiness of heaven would be sure to descend along with them. Could any world be pointed out, where the universality and reign of vice effected the same state of blissful and secure enjoyment that virtue would in ours—we should infer that he was the patron and the friend of vice, who had dominion over it. But

when assured, on the experience we have of our actual nature, that in the world we occupy, a perfect morality would, but for certain physical calamities, be the harbinger of a perfect enjoyment —we regard this as an incontestable evidence for the moral goodness of our own actual Diety.

10. And in such an argument as the present although the main beatitudes of virtue are of a moral and spiritual character, its subserviency to the physical enjoyments of life ought not to be overlooked, though, perhaps, too obvious to be dwelt upon. The most palpable of these subserviencies is the effect of benevolence in diffusing abundance among the needy, and so alleviating the ills of their destitution. This is so very patent as not to require being expatiated on. Yet we might notice here one important adaptation, connected with the exercise of this morality—realized but in part, so long as virtue has only a partial occupation in society; but destined, we hope, to receive its entire and beautiful accomplishment, when virtue shall have become universal. It is well known that certain collateral but very serious mischiefs attend the exercise of a profuse and capricious and indiscriminate charity; that it may, in fact, augment and aggravate the indigence which it tries to relieve, beside working a moral deterioration among the humbler classes, by ministering to the reckless improvidence of the dissipated and the idle; an operation alike injurious to the physical comfort of the one party, and to the moral comfort of the other. These effects are inevitable, so long as the indiscriminate benevolence of the rich meets with

an indefinite selfishness and rapacity on the part of the poor. But this evil will be mitigated and at length done away, with the growth of principle among mankind; and more especially, when, instead of being confined to one of these classes, it is partitioned among both. Let the wealthy be as generous as they ought in their doings, and the poor be as moderate as they ought in their expectations and desires; and then will that problem, which has so baffled the politicians and economists of England, find its own spontaneous, while, at the same time, its best adjustment. Let an exuberant yet well directed liberality on the one side come into encounter, instead of a sordid and insatiable appetency, with the recoil of delicacy and self-respect upon the other, and the noble independence of men who will work with their own hands rather than be burdensome; and then will the benefactions of the wealthy and the wants of the indigent, not only meet but overpass. The willingness of the one party to give, will exceed the willingness of the other to receive; and an evil which threatens to rend society asunder, and which law in her attempts to remedy has only exasperated, will at length give way before the omnipotence of moral causes. This, as being one of many specimens, tells most significantly that man was made for virtue, or that this was the purpose of God in making him—when we find, that through no other medium than the morality of the people, can the sorest distempers of society be healed. The impotence of human wisdom, and of every political expedient which this wisdom can devise for the well-being of a state, when virtue languishes among

the people, is one of the strongest proofs which experience affords, that virtue was the design of our creation. And we know not how more emphatic demonstration can be given of a virtuous Deity, than when we find society to have been so constructed by His hands, that virtue forms the great alternative on which the secure or lasting prosperity of a commonwealth is hinged—so that for any aggregate of human beings to be right physically and right economically, it is the indispensable, while at the same time the all-effectual condition, that they should be right morally.

11. Nothing can be more illustrative of the character of God, or more decisive of the question, whether His preference is for universal virtue or for universal vice in the world, than to consider the effect of each on the well-being of human society—even that society which He did Himself ordain, and whose mechanism is the contrivance of His own intellect, and the work of His own hands. It may not be easy to explain the origin of that moral derangement into which the species has actually fallen; but it affords no obscure or uncertain indication of what the species was principally made for, when we picture to ourselves the difference between a commonwealth of vice and a commonwealth of virtue. We have already said enough on the obvious connexion which obtains between the righteousness of a nation and the happiness of its families; and it were superfluous to dilate on the equally obvious connexion which obtains between a state of general depravity, and a state of general wretchedness and disorder. And the

counterpart observation holds true, that, as the beatitudes of the one condition, so the sufferings of the other are chiefly made up of moral elements. If, in the former, there be a more precious and heartfelt enjoyment in the possession of another's kindness, than in all the material gifts and services to which that kindness has prompted him—so in the latter, may it often happen, that the agony arising from simple consciousness of another's malignity, will greatly exceed any physical hurt, whether in person or property, that we ever shall sustain from him. A loss that we suffer from the dishonesty of another is far more severely felt, than a ten-fold loss occasioned by accident or misfortune —or, in other words, we find the moral provocation to be greatly more pungent and intolerable than the physical calamity. So that beside the material damage, too palpable to be insisted on at any length, which vice and violence inflict upon society, there should be taken into account the soreness of spirit, the purely mental distress and disquietude which follow in their train—of which we have already seen, how much is engendered even in the workings of one individual mind; but susceptible of being inflamed to a degree indefinitely higher, by the reciprocal working of minds, all of them hating and all hateful to each other. In this mere antipathy of the heart, more especially when aided by nearness and the opportunities of mutual expression, there are sensations of most exquisite bitterness. There is a wretchedness in the mere collision of hostile feelings themselves, though they should break not forth into overt-acts of hostility;

in the simple demonstrations of malignity, apart from its doings; in the war but of words and looks and fierce gesticulations, though no violence should be inflicted on the one side or sustained upon the other. To make the aggressor in these purely mental conflicts intensely miserable, it is enough that he should experience within him the agitations and the fires of a resentful heart. To make the recipient intensely miserable, it is enough that he should be demoniacally glared upon by a resentful eye. Were this power which resides in the emotions by themselves sufficiently reflected on, it would evince how intimately connected, almost how identified, wickedness and wretchedness are with each other. To realize the miseries of a state of war, it is not necessary that there should be contests of personal strength. The mere contests of personal feeling will suffice. Let there be mutual rage and mutual revilings; let there be the pangs and the outcries of fierce exasperation; let there be the continual droppings of peevishness and discontent; let disdain meet with equal disdain; or even, instead of scorn from the lofty, let there be but the slights and the insults of contempt from men, who themselves are of the most contemptible; let there be haughty defiance, and spiteful derision, and the mortifications of affronted and irritated pride—in the tumults of such a scene, though tumults of the mind alone, there were enough to constitute a hell of assembled maniacs or of assembled malefactors. The very presence and operation of these passions would form their own sorest punishment. To have them perpetually in

ourselves is to have a hell in the heart. To meet with them perpetually in others is to be compassed about with a society of fiends, to be beset with the miseries of a Pandemonium.

12. Whether we look then to the separate or the social constitution of humanity, we observe abundant evidence for the mind and meaning of the Deity, who both put together the elements of each individual nature, and the elements which enter into the composition of society. We cannot imagine a more decisive indication of His favour being on the side of moral good, and His displeasure against moral evil, than that, by the working of each of these constitutions, virtue and happiness on the one hand, vice and wretchedness on the other, should be so intimately and inseparably allied. Such sequences or laws of nature as these, speak as distinctly the character of him who established them, as any laws of jurisprudence would the character of the monarch by whom they were enacted. And to learn this lesson, we do not need to wait for the distant consequences of vice or virtue. We at once feel the distinction put upon them by the hand of the Almighty, in the instant sensations which He hath appended to each of them—implicated as their effects are with the very fountain-head of moral being, and turning the hearts which they respectively occupy, into the seats either of wildest anarchy, or of serene and blissful enjoyment.

13. The law and operation of habit, as exemplified in one individual mind formed the theme of our

third general argument.* The only adaptation which we shall notice to this part of our mental constitution in the framework of society, is that afforded by the changes which it undergoes in the flux of its successive generations—in virtue of which, the tender susceptibilities of childhood are placed under the influence of that ascendant seniority which precedes or goes before it. At first sight it may be thought of this peculiarity, that it tells equally in both directions—that is, either in the transmission and accumulation of vice, or in the transmission and accumulation of virtue in the world. But there is one circumstance of superiority in favour of the latter, which bids us look hopefully onward to the final prevalence of the good over the evil. We are aware of the virulence wherewith, in families, the crime and profligacy of a depraved parentage must operate on the habits of their offspring; and of the deadly poison which, in crowded cities, passes with quick descent from the older to the younger, along the links of youthful companionship; and even of those secret, though we trust rare and monstrous societies, which, in various countries and various ages, were held for the celebration of infernal orgies, for the initiation of the yet unknowing or unpractised in the mysteries of vice. But after every deduction has been made for these, who does not see that the systematic and sustained effort, the wide and general enterprise, the combination of numbers in the face of day and with the sympathies of an approving public, give a prodigious

* Book III. Chap. iv.

balance on the side of moral education? The very selfishness of vice and expansiveness of virtue give rise to this difference between them—the one concentered on its own personal enjoyments, and, with a few casual exceptions, rather heedless of the principles of others than set on any schemes or speculations of proselytism; the other, by its very nature, aspiring after the good of the whole species, and bent on the propagation of its own likeness, till righteousness and truth shall have become universal among men. Accordingly, all the ostensible countenance and exertion, in the cause of learning, whether by governments or associations, is on the side of virtue; while no man could dare to front the public eye, with a scheme of discipleship in the lessons whether of fraud or profligacy. The clear tendency then is to impress a right direction on the giant power of education; and when this is brought to bear, more systematically and generally than heretofore, on the pliant boyhood of the land —we behold, in the operation of habit, a guarantee for the progressive conquests, and at length the ultimate and universal triumph of good over evil in society. Our confidence in this result is greatly enhanced, when we witness the influence even of but one mind among the hundreds of any given neighbourhood—if zealously and wisely directed to the object of moral and economical improvement. Let that most prolific of all philanthropy then be fully and fairly set on foot, which operates, by means of education, on the early germs of character; and we shall have the most effective of all agency engaged, for the production of the likeliest of all

results. The law of habit, when looked to in the manageable ductility of its outset, presents a mighty opening for the production of a new era in the moral history of mankind; and the same law of habit, when looked to in the maturity of its fixed and final establishment, encourages the expectation of a permanent as well as universal reign of virtue in the world.

14. Even in the yet chaotic and rudimental state of the world, we can observe the powers and the likelihoods of such a consummation; and what gives an overbearing superiority to the chances on the side of virtue is, that parents, although the most sunken in depravity themselves, welcome the proposals, and receive with gratitude, the services of Christian or moral philanthropy in behalf of their families. However hopeless then of reformation among those whose vicious habits have become inveterate, it is well that there should be so wide and unobstructed an access to those, among whom the habits have yet to be formed. It is this which places education on such firm vantage-ground, if not for reclaiming the degeneracy of individuals, yet for reclaiming after the lapse of a few generations the degeneracy of the species; and however abortive many of the schemes and enterprises in this highest walk of charity may hitherto have proved, yet the manifest and growing attention to the cause does open a brilliant moral perspective for the ages that are to come. The experience of what has been done locally by a few zealous individuals, warrants our most cheering anticipations of what may yet be done universally—when the powers of that simple but mighty instrument which they employ, if

brought to bear on that most malleable of all subjects, the infancy of human existence, come to be better understood, and put into busy operation over the whole length and breadth of the land. In the grievous defect of our national institutions, and the wretched abandonment of a people left to themselves, and who are permitted to live recklessly and at random as they list—we see enough to account both for the profligacy of our crowded cities, and for the sad demoralization of our neglected provinces. But on the other hand we feel assured, that, in an efficient system of wise and well principled instruction, there are capabilities within our reach for a great and glorious revival. We might not know the reason, why, in the moral world, so many ages of darkness and depravity should have been permitted to pass by—any more than we know the reason, why, in the natural world, the trees of a forest, instead of starting all at once into the full efflorescence and stateliness of their manhood, have to make their slow and laborious advancement to maturity, cradled in storms, and alternately drooping or expanding with the vicissitudes of the seasons. But, though unable to scan all the cycles either of the moral or natural economy, yet may we recognise such influences at work, as when multiplied and developed to the uttermost, are abundantly capable of regenerating the world. One of the likeliest of these influences is the power of education—to the perfecting of which so many minds are earnestly directed at this moment; and for the general acceptance of which in society, we have a guarantee, in the strongest affections and fondest wishes of the fathers and mothers of families.

CHAPTER II.

On the special and subordinate Adaptations of external Nature to the moral Constitution of Man.

1. We have hitherto confined our attention to certain great and simple phenomena of our moral nature, which, though affording a different sort of evidence for the being of God from the organic and complicated structures of the material world—yet, on the hypothesis of an existent Deity, are abundantly decisive of His preference for virtue over vice, and so of the righteousness of His own character. That he should have inserted a great master faculty in every human bosom, all whose decisions are on the side of justice, benevolence, and truth, and condemnatory of their opposites; that he should have invested this conscience with such powers of instant retribution, in the triumphs of that complacency wherewith he so promptly rewards the good, and the horrors of that remorse wherewith He as promptly chastises the evil; that beside these, He should have so distinguished between virtue and vice,* as that the emotions and

* Butler, in Part I, Chapter 3d of his Analogy, makes the following admirable discrimination between actions themselves and that quality ascribed to them which we call virtuous or vicious. —"An action by which any natural passion is gratified, or fortune acquired, procures delight or advantage, abstracted from all consideration of the morality of such action, consequently the pleasure or advantage in this case is gained by the action itself, not by the morality, the virtuousness, or viciousness of it, though it be, perhaps, virtuous or vicious. Thus to say, such an action or course

exercises of the former should all be pleasurable, and of the latter painful to the taste of the inner man; that he should have so ordained the human constitution, as that by the law of habit, virtuous and vicious lives, or series of acts having these respective moral qualities, should issue in the fixed and permanent results of virtuous and vicious characters —these form the important generalities of our moral nature: And while they obviously and immediately announce to us a present demonstration in favour of virtue; they seem to indicate a preparation and progress towards a state of things, when, after that the moral education of the present life has been consummated, the great ruler of men will manifest the eternal distinction which he puts between the good and the evil.

2. Now in these few simple sequences, however strongly and unequivocally they evince the character of a God already proved or already presupposed, we have not the same intense evidence for design, which is afforded by the distinct parts or the distinct principles of a very multifarious combination. Yet the constitution of man's moral nature is not defective in this evidence—though certainly neither so prolific nor so palpable in our mental, as in our anatomical system. Still, however, there is a mechanism in mind as well as body,

of behaviour, procured such pleasure or advantage, or brought on such inconvenience and pain, is quite a different thing from saying that such good or bad effect was owing to the virtue or vice of such action or behaviour. In one case, an action abstracted from all moral consideration, produced its effect. In the other case, for it will appear that there are such cases, the morality of the action, the action under a moral consideration, *i. e.* the virtuousness or viciousness of it, produced the effect.

with a diversity of principles, if not a diversity of parts, consisting of so many laws, grafted it may be on a simple and indivisible substance, yet yielding in the fact of their beneficial concurrence, no inconsiderable argument for the wisdom and goodness of Him who framed us. Nor does it matter, as we have already said, whether these are all of them original, or some of them, as the analysts of mind have laboured to manifest, only derivative laws in the human constitution. If the former, we have an evidence grounded on the beneficial conjunction of a greater number of independent laws. If the latter, we are reduced to fewer independent laws—but these all the more prolific of useful applications, each of which applications is grounded on a beneficial adaptation of some peculiar circumstances, in the operation of which it is, that the primary is transmuted into a secondary law.* But whether the one or the other, they exhibit phases of humanity distinct from any that we have yet been employed in contemplating; a number of special affections, each characterized by its own name, and pointing to its own separate object, yet all of them performing an important subsidiary part, for the moral good both of the individual and of the species; and presenting us, therefore, with the materials of additional evidence for a moral and beneficent design in the formation of our race.

* And besides this, would it not bespeak a more comprehensive wisdom on the part of a human artificer, that by means of one device, or by the application of one principle, he effected not a few, but many distinct and beneficial purposes; and does it not in like manner enhance the exhibition of divine skill in the workmanship of nature, when a single law is found to subserve a vast and manifold variety of important uses?

3. When we look to the beauty which overspreads the face of nature, and the exquisite gratification which it ministers to the senses of man —we cannot doubt, either the taste for beauty which resides in the primeval mind that emanated all this gracefulness; or the benevolence that endowed man with a kindred taste, and so fitted him for a kindred enjoyment. This conclusion, however, like any moral conclusion we have yet come to, respecting the perfections or the purposes of God, is founded on generalities—on the general amount of beauty in the world, and the delight wherewith men behold and admire it. Yet, beside this, we may draw a corroborative evidence for the same, from the machinery of certain special contrivances—as the construction of the calyx in plants, for the defence of the tender blossom previous to its expansion; and the apparatus for scattering seeds, whereby the earth is more fully invested with its mantle of rich and varied garniture. And notwithstanding the blight which has so obviously passed over the moral world, and defaced many of its original lineaments, while it has left the materialism of creation, the loveliness of its scenes and landscapes, in a great measure untouched—still we possess very much the same materials for a Natural Theology, in reasoning on the element of virtue, as in reasoning on the element of beauty. We have first those generalities of argument which are already expounded by us at sufficient length; and we have also the evidence, now to be unfolded, of certain special provisions for the preservation and growth of the

immortal plant, in the study of which, we shall observe more of mechanism than we have yet contemplated; and more, therefore, of that peculiar argument for design, which lies in the adaptation of varied means, in the concurrence of distinct expedients, each helping the other onward to a certain beneficial consummation.

4. But we must here premise an observation extensively applicable in mental science. When recognising the obvious subserviency of some given feeling or principle in the mind to a beneficial result—we are apt to imagine that it was somehow or other, in the contemplation of this result, that the principle was generated; and that therefore, instead of a distinct and original part of the human constitution, it is but a derivative from an anterior process of thought or calculation on the part of man, in the act of reflecting on what was most for the good of himself, or the good of society. In this way man is conceived to be in some measure the creator of his own mental constitution; or, at least, there are certain parts of it regarded as secondary, and the formation of which is ascribed to the wisdom of man, which, if regarded as instinctive and primary, would have been directly ascribed to the wisdom of God. There are many writers, for example, on the origin and rights of property, who, instead of admitting what may be termed an instinct of appropriation, would hold the appropriating tendency to be the result of human intelligence, after experience had of the convenience and benefits of such an arrangement. Now on this subject, we may take a lesson from the physical constitution of

man. It is indispensable to the preservation of our animal system, that food should be received at certain intervals into the stomach. Yet, notwithstanding all the strength which is ascribed to the principle of self-preservation, and all the veneration which is professed by the expounders of our nature for the wisdom and foresight of man—the author of our frame has not left this important interest merely to our care, or our consideration. He has not so trusted us to ourselves; but has inserted among the other affections and principles wherewith He has endowed us, the appetite of hunger—a strong and urgent and ever-recurring desire for food, which, it is most certain, stands wholly unconnected with any thought on our part, of its physical or posterior uses for the sustenance of the body; and from which it would appear, that we need to be not only reminded at proper intervals of this incumbent duty, but goaded on to it. Could the analysts of our nature have ascertained of hunger, that it was the product of man's reflection on the necessity of food, it might have been quoted as an instance of the care which man takes of himself. But it seems that he could not be thus confided, either with his own individual preservation, or with the preservation of his species; and so, for the security of both these objects, strong appetites had to be given him, which, incapable of being resolved into any higher principles, stand distinctly and unequivocally forth, as instances of the care that is taken of him by God.

5. Now this, though it does not prove, yet may prepare us to expect similar provisions in the

constitution of our minds. Indeed the operose and complicated system, which the great Architect of nature hath devised for our bodies, carries in it a sort of warning to those, who, enamoured of the simplifications of theory, would labour to reduce all our mental phenomena to one or two principles. There is no warrant for this in the examples which Anatomy and Physiology, those sciences that have to do with the animal economy of man, have placed before our eyes. Now, though we admit not this as evidence for the actual complexity of man's moral economy—it may at least school away those prepossessions of the fancy or of the taste, that would lead us to resist or to dislike such evidence when offered. We hold it not unlikely that the same being, who, to supplement the defects of human prudence, hath furnished us with distinct corporeal appetites, that might prompt us to operations, of the greatest subservient benefit both to the individual and the species—might also, to supplement the defects of human wisdom and principle, have furnished us with distinct mental affections or desires, both for our own particular good and the good of society. If man could not be left to his own guidance, in matters which needed but the anticipation of a few hours; but to save him from the decay and the death which must have otherwise ensued, had so powerful a remembrancer and instigator given to him as the appetite of hunger—we ought not to marvel, should it be found that nature, in endowing him mentally, hath presumed on his incapacity, either for wisely devising or for regularly acting, with a view to

distant consequences, and amid the complicated relations of human society. It may, on the one hand, have inserted forces, when the mere consideration of good effects would not have impelled; or, on the other hand, may have inserted checks, when the mere consideration of evil effects would not have arrested. Yet so it is, that, because of the good that is thereby secured and of the evil that is thereby shunned—we are apt to imagine of some of the most useful principles of our nature, that they are, somehow, the product of human manufacture; the results of human intelligence, or of rapid processes of thought by man, sitting in judgment on the consequences of his actions, and wisely providing either for or against them. Now it is very true, that the anger, and the shame, and the emulation, and the parental affection, and the compassion, and the love of reputation, and the sense of property, and the conscience or moral sense—are so many forces of a mechanism, which if not thus furnished, and that too within certain proportions, would run into a disorder that might have proved destructive both of the individual and of the species. For reasons already hinted at, we hold it immaterial to the cause of natural theism, whether these constitutional propensities of the human mind are its original or its secondary laws; but, at all events, it is enough for any argument of ours, that they are not so generated by the wisdom of man, as to supersede the inference which we draw from them, in favour both of the wisdom and goodness of God.

6. The common definition given of anger, is an

instance of the tendency on the part of philosophers, if not to derive, at least to connect the emotions of which we have been made susceptible with certain anterior or higher principles of our nature. Dr. Reid tells us that the proper object of resentment is an injury; and that as "no man can have the notion of injustice, without having the notion of justice," then, "if resentment be natural to man, the notion of justice must be no less natural."* And Dr. Brown defines anger to be "that emotion of instant displeasure, which arises from the feeling of injury done or the discovery of injury intended, or, in many cases, from the discovery of the mere omission of good offices to which we conceived ourselves entitled, though this very omission may, of itself, be regarded as a species of injury." Now the sense of injury implies a sense of its opposite—a sense of justice, therefore, or the conception of a moral standard from which the injury that has awakened the resentment, is felt to be a deviation. But as nothing ought to form part of a definition, which is not indispensable to the thing defined, it would appear, as if, in the judgment of both these philosophers, all who were capable of anger must also have, to a certain degree, a capacity of moral

* In glaring contradiction to this, is Dr. Reid's own affirmation regarding the brutes. He says, "that conscience is peculiar to man, we see no vestige of it in the brute animals. It is one of those prerogatives by which we are raised above them." But animals are most abundantly capable of anger—even of that which, by a very general definition, is said to be the emotion that is awakened by a sense of injury, which sense of injury must imply in it the sense of its opposite, even of justice, and so land us in the conclusion that brutes are capable of moral conception, or that they have a conscience.

judgment or moral feeling. The property of resenting a hurt inflicted upon ourselves, would, at this rate, argue, in all cases, a perception of what the moral and equitable adjustment would be between ourselves and others. Now, that these workings of a moral nature are essential to the feeling of anger, is an idea which admits of most obvious and decisive refutation—it being an emotion to which not only infants are competent, anterior to the first dawnings of their moral nature; but even idiots, with whom this nature is obliterated, or still more the inferior animals who want it altogether. There must be a sense of annoyance to originate the feeling; but a sense of injury, implying, as it does, a power of moral judgment or sensibility, can be in no way indispensable to an emotion, exemplified in its utmost force and intensity by sentient creatures, in whom there cannot be detected even the first rudiments of a moral nature. Two dogs, when fighting for a bone, make as distinct and declared an exhibition of their anger, as two human beings when disputing about the boundary of their contiguous fields. The emotion flashes as unequivocally from any of the inferior, as it does from the only rational and moral species on the face of our globe; as in the vindictive glare of an infuriated bull, or of a lioness robbed of her whelps, and who as if making proclamation of her wrongs, gives forth her deep and reiterated cry to the echoes of the wilderness. It is an emotion, in fact, which seems coextensive, not only with moral, but with physical sensation. And, if any faith can be placed in the physiognomy, or the natural signs, by which irrational creatures

represent what passes within them; this passion announces itself as vividly and discernibly in the outcries of mutual resentment which ring throughout the amplitudes of savage and solitary nature, as in the contests of civilized man.

7. The truth, then, seems to be, that the office of the moral faculty is, not to originate, but rather to confine and qualify and regulate this emotion. Anger, if we but study its history and actual exhibitions, will be found the primary and the natural response to a hurt or harm or annoyance of any sort inflicted on us by others; and, as such, may be quite expansive and unrestrained and open to excitation from all points of the compass—anterior to and apart from any consideration of its justice, or whether in the being who called it forth, there have been the purpose or not of violating our rights. Infants are fully capable of the feeling, long before they have a notion of equity, or of what is rightfully their own and rightfully another's. The anger of animals, too, is, in like manner, destitute of that moral ingredient, which the definitions we have quoted suppose indispensable to the formation of it. And yet their emitted sounds have the very expression of fierceness, that we meet with so often among the fellows of our own species. The provocation, the resentment, the kindling glance of hostility, the gradual heightening of the wrath, its discharge in acts of mutual violence, and lastly, its glutted satisfaction in the flight and even the death of the adversary—these are all indicative of kindred workings within, that have their outward vent in a common and kindred physiog-

nomy, between him who is styled the lord of the creation, and those beneath his feet, who are conceived to stand at a distance that scarcely admits of comparison in the phenomena of their nature. Even man, in the full growth of his rational and moral nature, will often experience the outbreakings of an anger merely physical; as, to state one instance out of the many, may be witnessed in the anger wreaked by him on the inferior animals, when, all unconscious of injury to him, they enter upon his fields, or damage the fruit of his labours. The object of a just resentment towards others, is the proposed injustice of others towards us; and, so far from purposing the injustice, animals have not even the faculty of conceiving it. The moral consideration, then, does not enter as a constituent part into all resentment. It is rather a superadded quality which designates a species of it. It is not the epithet which characterizes all anger, but is limited to a certain kind of it. It may be as proper to say of one anger that it is just, and of another that justice or morality has had nothing to do with it—as it is to say of one blow by the hand that it has been rightfully awarded, and of another blow that such a moral characteristic is wholly inapplicable. Morality may at times characterize both the mental feeling, and the muscular performance; but it should be as little identified with the one as with the other. And however much analysts may have succeeded on other occasions, in reducing to sameness what appeared to be separate constituents of our nature, certain it is, that anger cannot thus be regarded as a resulting

manufacture from any of its higher principles. It forms a distinct and original part of our constitution, of which morality, whenever it exists and has the predominance, might take the direction, without being at all essential to the presence or operation of it. So far from this, it is nowhere exhibited in greater vivacity and distinctness than by those creatures who possess but an animal, without so much as the germ, or the rudest elements of a moral nature.

8. Anger then is an emotion that may rage and tumultuate in a bosom into which one moral conception has never entered. For its excitement nothing more seems necessary than to thwart any desire however unreasonable, or to disappoint any one object which the heart may chance to be set upon. So far from a sense of justice being needful to originate this emotion—it is the man who, utterly devoid of justice, would monopolize to himself all that lies within the visible horizon, who is most exposed to its visitations. He is the most vulnerable to wrath from every point of the vast circumference around him—who, conceiving the Universe to be made for himself alone, is most insensible to the rights and interests of other men. It is in fact because he is so unfurnished with the ideas of justice, that he is so unbridled in resentment. Justice views the world and all its interests as already partitioned among the various members of the human population, each occupying his own little domain; and, instead of permitting anger to expatiate at random over the universal face of things, justice would curb and over-rule its ebullitions in the bosom of every individual, till a trespass

was made within the limits of that territory which is properly and peculiarly his own. In other words, it is the office of this virtue, not to inspire anger, but to draw landmarks and limitations around it; and, so far from a high moral principle originating this propensity, it is but an animal propensity, restrained and kept within check and confinement at the bidding of principle.

9. The distinction between reflective and unreflective anger did not escape the notice of the sagacious Butler, as may be seen in the following passages of a sermon upon resentment.—"Resentment is of two kinds—hasty and sudden, or settled and deliberate. The former is called anger and often passion, which, though a general word, is frequently appropriated and confined to the particular feeling, sudden anger, as distinct from deliberate resentment malice and revenge." "Sudden anger upon certain occasions is mere instinct, as merely so, as the disposition to close our eyes upon the apprehension of something falling into them, and no more necessarily implies any degree of reason. I say necessarily, for, to be sure, hasty as well as deliberate anger, may be occasioned by injury or contempt, in which cases reason suggests to our thoughts the injury and contempt which is the occasion of the emotion: But I am speaking of the former, only in so far as it is to be distinguished from the latter. The only way in which our reason and understanding can raise anger, is by representing to our mind an injustice or injury of some kind or other. Now momentary anger is frequently raised, not only without any rule, but without any

reason; that is, without any appearance of injury as distinct from hurt or pain. It cannot, I suppose, be thought that this passion in infants and the lower species of animals, and which is often seen in man towards them, it cannot, I say, be imagined that these instances of this emotion are the effect of reason: no, they are occasioned by mere sensation and feeling. It is opposition, sudden hurt, violence which naturally excites this passion; and the real demerit or fault of him who offers that violence, or is the cause of that opposition or hurt, does not in many cases so much as come into thought." "The reason and end for which man was made thus liable to this emotion, is that he might be better qualified to prevent, and likewise or perhaps chiefly to resist and defeat sudden force, violence, and opposition, considered merely as such, and without regard to the fault or demerit of him who is the author of them; yet since violence may be considered in this other and further view, as implying fault, and since injury as distinct from harm may raise sudden anger, sudden anger may likewise accidentally serve to prevent or remedy such fault and injury. But considered as distinct from settled anger, it stands in our nature for self-defence, and not for the administration of justice. There are plainly cases, and in the uncultivated parts of the world, and where regular governments are not formed they frequently happen, in which there is no time for considering, and yet to be passive is certain destruction, in which sudden resistance is the only security."—It is an exceeding good instance that Bishop Butler gives of the distinction between

instinctive and what may be called rational anger, when he specifies the anger that we often feel towards the inferior animals. There is properly no injury done, where there is no injury intended. And he who is incapable of conceiving what an injury is, is not a rightful object for at least any moral resentment. But that there is what may be called a physical as well as a moral resentment, is quite palpable from the positive wrath which is felt when any thing untoward or hurtful is done to us even by the irrational creatures. The men who use them as instruments of service often discharge the most outrageous wrath upon them—acting the part of ferocious tyrants towards these wretched victims of their cruelty. When a combat takes place between man and one of the inferior animals, there is a resentment felt by the former just as keen and persevering, as if it were between two human combatants. This makes it quite obvious that there may be anger without any sense of designed injury on the part of him who is the object of it. Even children, idiots, lunatics, might all be the objects of such a resentment.

10. The final cause of this emotion in the inferior animals is abundantly obvious. It stimulates and ensures resistance to that violence, which, if not resisted, would often terminate in the destruction of its object. And it probably much oftener serves the purpose of prevention than of defence. The first demonstration of a violence to be offered on the one hand, when met by the preparation and the counter-menace of an incipient resentment on the other, not only repels the

aggression after it has begun, but still more frequently, we believe, through the reaction and restraint of fear on the otherwise attacking party, prevents the aggression from being made. The stout and formidable antagonists eye each other with a sort of natural respect; and, as if by a common though tacit consent, wisely abstain on either side from molestation, and pass onward without a quarrel. It is thus that many a fierce contest is forborne, which, but for the operation of anger on the one side, and fear upon the other, would most certainly have been entered upon. And so by a system, or machinery of reciprocal checks and counteractives, and where the mental affections too perform the part of essential forces, there is not that incessant warfare of extermination which might have depopulated the world. And here we might observe, that, in studying that balance of powers and of preserving influences, which obtains even in a commonwealth of brutes, the uses of a mental are just as palpable as those of a material collocation. The anger which prompts to the resistance of aggression is as obviously inserted by the hand of a contriver, as are the horns or the bristles or any other defensive weapons wherewith the body of the animal is furnished. The fear which wings the flight of a pursued animal is as obviously intended for its safety, as is its muscular conformation or capacity for speed. The affection of a mother for her young points as intelligibly to a designer's care for the preservation of the species, as does that apparatus of nourishment wherewith nature hath endowed her. The

mother's fondness supplies as distinct and powerful an argument as the mother's milk—or, in other words, a mental constitution might, as well as a physical constitution, be pregnant with the indications of a God.

11. But to return to the special affection of anger, with a reference more particularly to its workings in our own species, where we have the advantage of nearer and distincter observation. We must be abundantly sensible of the pain which there is, not merely in the feeling of resentment, when it burns and festers within our own hearts, but also in being the objects of another's resentment. They are not the effects only of his anger that we are afraid of; we are afraid of the anger itself, of but the looks and the words of angry violence, though we should be perfectly secure from all the deeds of violence. The simple displeasure of another is formidable, though no chastisement whatever shall follow upon it. We are so constituted, that we tremble before the frown of an offended countenance, and perhaps as readily as we would under the menace of an uplifted arm; and would often make as great a sacrifice to shun the moral discomfort of another's wrath, as to shun the physical infliction which his wrath might impel him to lay upon us. It is thus that where there is no strength for any physical infliction, still there may be a power of correction that amply makes up for it, in the rebuke of an indignant eye or an indignant voice. This goes far to repair the inequalities of muscular force among men; and forms indeed a most important mound of defence against the

effervescence and the outbreakings of brute violence in society. It is incalculable how much we owe to this influence for the peace and courteousness that obtain in every neighbourhood. The more patent view of anger is, that it is an instrument of defence against the aggressions of violence or injustice; and by which they are kept in check, from desolating, as they otherwise would, the face of society. But it not only operates as a corrective against the outrages that are actually made. It has a preventive operation also; and we are wholly unable to say, in how far the dread of its forth-breaking, serves to soften and to subdue human intercourse into those many thousand decencies of mutual forbearance and complaisance, by which it is gladdened and adorned. There is a recoil from anger in the heart of every man when directed against himself; and many who would disdain to make one sacrifice by which to appease it, after it had thrown down the gauntlet of hostility, will in fact make one continued sacrifice of their tone and manner and habit, that it may not be awakened out of its slumbers. It were difficult to compute how much we are indebted, for the blandness and the amenity of human companionships, to the consciousness of so many sleeping fires, in readiness to blaze forth, at the touch or on the moment of any provocation being offered. We doubt not, that, in military and fashionable, and indeed in all society, it acts as a powerful restraint on every thing that is offensive. The domineering insolence of those who, with the instrument of anger too, would hold society in bondage, is most effectually

arrested, when met by an anger which throws back the fear upon themselves, and so quiets and composes all their violence. It is thus that a balance is maintained, without which human society might go into utter derangement; and without which too, even the animal creation might lose its stability and disappear. And there is a kind of moral power in the anger itself, that is separate from the animal or the physical strength which it puts into operation; and which invests with command, or at least provides with defensive armour those who would otherwise be the most helpless of our species—so that decrepid age or feeble womanhood has by the mere rebuke of an angry countenance made the stoutest heart to tremble before them. It is a moral force, by which the inequalities of muscular force are repaired; and, while itself a firebrand and a destroyer, yet, by the very terror of its ravages, which it diffuses among all, were it to stalk abroad and at large over the world—does it contribute to uphold the pacific virtues among men.

12. When the anger of one individual in a household is the terror of the rest, then that individual may become the little despot of the establishment; and thus it is that often the feeblest of them all in muscular strength may wield a domestic tyranny by which the stoutest is overpowered. But when the anger of this one is fortunately met by the spirit and resolution of another, then, kept at bay with its own weapon, it is neutralized into a state of innocence. It is not necessary for the production of this effect

that the parties ever should have come to the extremity of an open and declared violence. If there be only a mutual consciousness of each other's energy of passion and of purpose, then a mutual awe and mutual forbearance may be the result of it. And thus it is, that, by the operation of these reciprocal checks in a family, the peace and order of it may be securely upholden. We have witnessed how much a wayward and outrageous temper has been sweetened, by the very presence in the same mansion, of one who could speak again, and would not succumb to any unreasonable violence. The violence is abated. And we cannot compute how much it is that the blandness and the mutual complaisance which obtain in society, are due to the secret dread in which men stand of each other's irritation; or, in other words, little do we know to what extent, the smile and the courteousness and the urbanity of civilized life, that are in semblance so many expressions of human benevolence, may, really and substantially, be owing to the fears of human selfishness. Were this speculation pursued, it might lead to a very humiliating estimate indeed of the virtue of individuals—though we cannot but admire the wisdom of that economy, by which, even without virtue, individuals may be made, through the mutual action and reaction of their emotions, to form the materials of a society that can stand. Anger does in private life, what the terrors of the penal code do in the community at large. It acts with salutary influence, in a vast multiplicity of cases, which no law could possibly provide for; and where the chastisements of law, whether in

their corrective or preventive influence, cannot reach. The good of a penal discipline in society extends far and wide beyond the degree in which it is actually inflicted; and many are the pacific habits of a neighbourhood, that might be ascribed, not to the pacific virtues of the men who compose it, but to the terror of those consequences which all men know would ensue upon their violation. And it is just so of anger, in the more frequent and retired intercourse of private life. The good which it does by the fear of its ebullitions is greater far than all which is done by the actual ebullitions themselves. But we cannot fail to perceive that the amount of service which is done *in this way* to the species at large, must all be regarded as a deduction from the amount of credit which is due to the individuals who belong to it. We have already remarked on the propensity of moralists to accredit the wisdom of man with effects, which, as being provided for not by any care or reflection of ours, but by the operation of constitutional instincts—are more properly and immediately to be ascribed to the wisdom of God. And in like manner, there is a propensity in moralists to accredit the wisdom of man with effects, which, as being provided for not by any consciousness or exercise of principle on our part, but by the operation still of constitutional instincts —are more properly and immediately to be ascribed to the goodness of God.*

13. There is another special affection which we

* The following extract from Brown tends well to illustrate one of the final causes for the implantation of this principle in our

feel more particularly induced to notice, from its palpable effect in restraining the excess of one of nature's strongest appetites. Its position in the mental system reminds one of the very obvious adaptation to each other of the antagonist muscles in anatomy. We allude to the operation of shame between the sexes, considered as a check or counteractive to the indulgence of passion between the sexes. The former is as clear an instance of moral, as the latter is of physical adaptation. And in their adjustment the one to the other,

constitution.—"What human wants required, that all-foreseeing Power, who is the guardian of our infirmities, has supplied to human weakness. There is a principle in our mind, which is to us like a constant protector, which may slumber, indeed, but which slumbers only at seasons when its vigilance would be useless, which awakes therefore, at the first appearance of unjust intention, and which becomes more watchful and more vigorous, in proportion to the violence of the attack which it has to dread. What should we think of the providence of nature, if, when aggression was threatened against the weak and unarmed, at a distance from the aid of others, there were instantly and uniformly, by the intervention of some wonder-working power, to rush into the hand of the defenceless a sword or other weapon of defence? And yet this would be but a feeble assistance, if compared with that which we receive from the simple emotions which Heaven has caused to rush, as it were, into our mind for repelling every attack. What would be a sword in the trembling hand of the infirm, of the aged, of him whose pusillanimous spirit shrinks at the very appearance, not of danger merely, but even of the arms by the use of which danger might be averted, and to whom consequently, the very sword, which he scarcely knew how to grasp, would be an additional cause of terror, not an instrument of defence and safety? The instant anger which arises does more than many such weapons. It gives the spirit, which knows how to make a weapon of every thing, or, which of itself does, without a weapon, what even a thunderbolt would be powerless to do, in the shuddering grasp of the coward. When anger arises, fear is gone; there is no coward, for all are brave. Even bodily infirmity seems to yield to it, like the very infirmities of the mind. The old are, for the moment, young again; the weakest, vigorous." Lect. lxiii.

we observe that sort of exquisite balancing, which, perhaps more than any thing else, indicates the wisdom and the hand of a master—as if when, in the execution of some very nice and difficult task, he is managing between contrary extremes, or is devising in just proportion for contrary interests. We might better comprehend the design of this strikingly peculiar mechanism, by imagining of the two opposite instincts, that either of them was in excess, or either of them in defect. Did the constitutional modesty prevail to a certain conceivable extent—it might depopulate the world. Did the animal propensity preponderate, on the other hand—it might land the world in an anarchy of unblushing and universal licentiousness—to the entire breaking up of our present blissful economy, by which society is partitioned into separate families, and, with the interests of domestic life to provide for, and its affections continually to recreate the heart in the midst of anxieties and labours, mankind are kept in a state both of most useful activity and of greatest enjoyment. We cannot conceive a more skilful, we had almost said a more delicate or dexterous adjustment, than the one actually fixed upon—by which, in the first instance, through an appetency sufficiently strong, the species is upholden; and, in the second instance, through the same appetency sufficiently restrained, those hallowed decencies of life are kept unviolate, which are so indispensable to all order and to all moral gracefulness among men. We have only to conceive the frightful aspect which society would put on, did unbridled licentiousness stalk at large

as a destroyer, and rifle every home of those virtues which at once guard and adorn it. The actual and the beautiful result, when viewed in connexion with that moral force, by the insertion of which in our nature it is accomplished, strongly bespeaks a presiding intellect—which in framing the mechanism of the human mind, had respect to what was most beneficent and best for the mechanism of human society.

14. It is well that man is so much the creature of a constitution which is anterior to his own wisdom and his own will, and of circumstances which are also anterior to his wisdom and his will. It would have needed a far more comprehensive view than we are equal to, both of what was best for men in a community and for man as an individual, to have left a creature so short-sighted or of such brief and narrow survey, with the fixing either of his own principles of action or of his relation with the external world. That constitutional shame, that quick and trembling delicacy, a prompt and ever-present guardian, appearing as it does in very early childhood, is most assuredly not a result from any anticipation by us, either of future or distant consequences. Even the moral sense within us, does not speak so loudly or so distinctly the evil of this transgression, as it does of falsehood, or of injurious freedom with the property of a neighbour, or of personal violence. Other forces than those of human prudence or human principle seem to have been necessary, for resisting a most powerful and destructive fascination, which never is indulged, without

deterioration to the whole structure of the moral character and constitution; and which, when once permitted to lord it over the habits, so often terminates in the cruel disruption of families, and the irretrievable ruin and disgrace of the offender. It is not by any prospective calculation of ours, that this natural modesty, acting as a strong precautionary check against evils which however tremendous, we are too heedless to reflect upon, has been established within us. It is directly implanted by one, who sees the end from the beginning; and so forms altogether a most palpable instance, in which we have reason to congratulate ourselves, that the well-being of man, instead of being abandoned to himself, has been placed so immediately under the management of better and higher hands.

15. There are many other special affections in our nature—the principal of which will fall to be noticed in succeeding chapters; and the interests to which they are respectively subservient form a natural ground of division, in our treatment of them. Certain of these affections stand related to the civil, and certain of them to the economic well-being of society; and each of these subserviencies will form the subject of a separate argument.

CHAPTER III.

On those special Affections which conduce to the civil and political Well-being of Society.

1. The first step towards the aggregation of men into a community, or the first departure from a state of perfect isolation, could that state ever have subsisted for a single day, is the patriarchal arrangement. No sooner indeed is the infant creature ushered into being, than it is met by the cares and the caresses of those who are around it, and who have either attended or welcomed its entry on this scene of existence—as if, in very proportion to the extremity of its utter helplessness, was the strength of that security which nature hath provided, in the workings of the human constitution, for the protection of its weakness and the supply of all its little wants. That there should be hands to receive and to manage this tender visitant, is not more obviously a benevolent adaptation, than that there should be hearts to sympathize with its cries of impotency or distress. The maternal affection is as express an instance of this as the maternal nourishment—nor is the inference at all weakened, by the attempts, even though they should be successful, of those who would demonstrate of this universal fondness of mothers, that, instead of an original instinct, it is but a derived or secondary law of our nature. Were that analysis as distinct and satisfactory as it is doubtful

and obscure, which would resolve all mental phenomena into the single principle of association —still the argument would stand. A secondary law, if not the evidence of a distinct principle, requires at least distinct and peculiar circumstances for its development; and the right ordering of these for a beneficial result, is just as decisively the proof and the characteristic of a plan, as are the collocations of Anatomy. It might not have been necessary to endow matter with any new property for the preparation of a child's aliment in the breast of its mother—yet the framework of that very peculiar apparatus by which the milk is secreted, and the suckling's mouth provided with a duct of conveyance for the abstraction of it, is, in the many fitnesses of time and place and complicated arrangement, pregnant with the evidence of a designer's contrivance and a designer's care. And in like manner, though it should be established, that the affection of a mother for her young from the moment of their birth, instead of an independent principle in her nature, was the dependent product of remembrances and feelings which had accumulated during the period of gestation, and were at length fixed, amidst the agonies of parturition, into the strongest of all her earthly regards—the argument for design is just as entire, though, instead of connecting it with the peculiarity of an original law, we connect it with the peculiarity of those circumstances which favour the development of this maternal feeling, in the form of a secondary law. There is an infinity of conceivable methods, by which the successive generations of men might

have risen into being; and our argument is entire, if, out of these, that method has been selected, whereof the result is an intense affection on the part of mothers for their offspring. It matters not whether this universal propensity of theirs be a primary instinct of nature, or but a resulting habit which can be traced to the process which they have been actually made to undergo, or the circumstances in which they have actually been placed. The ordination of this process, the mandate for the assemblage and collocation of these circumstances, gives a distinct and decisive indication of an ordaining mind, as would the establishment of any peculiar law. Let it suffice once for all to have said this—for if in the prosecution of our inquiry, we stopped at every turn to entertain the question, whether each beneficial tendency on which we reasoned, were an original or only a secondary principle in nature—we should be constantly rushing uncalled into the mists of obscurity; and fastening upon our cause an element of doubt and weakness, which in no wise belongs to it.

2. The other affections which enter into the composition, or rather, form the cement of a family, are more obviously of a derivative, and less obviously of an instinctive character, than is that strong maternal affinity which meets so opportunely with the extreme helplessness of its objects, that but for the succour and sympathy of those whose delight it is to cherish and sustain them, would perish in the infancy of their being. However questionable the analysis might be, which would resolve the universal fondness of mothers for their

young into something anterior—the paternal and brotherly and filial affections seem, on surer grounds, and which are accessible to observation, not to be original but originated feelings. Inquirers, according to their respective tastes and tendencies, have deviated on both sides of the evidence—that is, either to an excessive and hypothetic simplification of nature, or to an undue multiplication of her first principles. And certain it is, that when told of the mystic ties which bind together into a domestic community, as if by a sort of certain peculiar attraction, all of the same kindred and the same blood—we are reminded of those occult qualities, which, in the physics both of matter and of mind, afforded so much of entertainment, to the scholastics of a former age. But with the adjustment of this philosophy we properly have no concern. It matters not to our argument whether the result in question be due to the force of instincts or to the force of circumstances,—any more than whether, in the physical system, a certain beneficial result may be ascribed to apt and peculiar laws, or to apt and peculiar collocations. In virtue of one or other or both of these causes, we behold the individuals of the species grouped together—or, as it may be otherwise expressed, the aggregate mass of the species, broken asunder into distinct families, and generally living by themselves, each family under one common roof, but apart from all the rest in distinct habitations; while the members of every little commonwealth are so linked by certain affections, or by certain feelings of reciprocal obligation, that each member feels almost as

intensely for the wants and sufferings of the rest as he would for his own, or labours as strenuously for the sustenance of all as he would for his own individual sustenance. There is very generally a union of hearts, and still oftener a union of hands, for the common interests and provision of the household.

3. The benefits of such an arrangement are too obvious to be enumerated. Even though the law of self-preservation had sufficed in those cases where the individual has adequate wisdom to devise, and adequate strength to provide for his own maintenance—of itself, it could not have availed, when this strength and this wisdom are wanting. It is in the bosom of families, and under the touch and impulse of family affections, that helpless infancy is nurtured into manhood, and helpless disease or age have the kindliest and most effective succour afforded to them. Even when the strength for labour, instead of being confined to one, is shared among several of the household, there is often an incalculable benefit, in the very concert of their forces and community of their gains—so long, for example, as a brotherhood, yet advancing towards maturity, continue to live under the same roof, and to live under the direction of one authority, or by the movement of one will. We shall not expatiate, either on the enjoyment that might be had under such an economy, while it lasts, in the sweets of mutual affection; or minutely explain how, after the economy is dissolved, and the separate members betake themselves each to his own way in the world —the duties and the friendships of domestic life are

not annihilated by this dispersion; but, under the powerful influence of a felt and acknowledged relationship, the affinities of kindred spread and multiply beyond their original precincts, to the vast increase of mutual sympathy and aid and good offices in general society. It will not, we suppose, be questioned—that a vastly greater amount of good is done by the instrumentality of others, and that the instrumentality itself is greatly more available, under the family system, to which we are prompted by the strong affections of nature, than if that system were dissolved. But the remarkable thing is, that these affections had to be provided, as so many impellent forces—guiding men onward to an arrangement the most prolific of advantage for the whole, but which no care or consideration of the general good would have led them to form. This provision for the wants of the social economy, is analogous to that, which we have already observed, for the wants of the animal economy. Neither of these interests was confided to any cold generality, whether of principle or prudence. In the one, the strong appetite of hunger supplements the deficiency of the rational principle of self-preservation. In the other, the strong family affections supplement the deficiency of the moral principle of general benevolence. Without the first, the requisite measures would not have been taken for the regular sustenance of the individual. Without the other, the requisite measures would not have been taken for the diffused sustenance of the community at large.

4. Such is the mechanism of human society, as it comes direct, from the hand of nature or of

nature's God. But many have been the attempts of human wisdom to mend and to meddle with it. Cosmopolitism, in particular, has endeavoured to substitute a sort of universal citizenship, in place of the family affections—regarding these as so many disturbing forces; because, operating only as incentives to a partial or particular benevolence, they divert the aim from that which should, it is contended, be the object of every enlightened philanthropist, the general and greatest good of the whole. It is thus that certain transcendental speculatists would cut asunder all the special affinities of our nature, in order that men, set at large from the ties and the duties of the domestic relationship, might be at liberty to prosecute a more magnificent and god-like career of virtue; and, in every single action, have respect, not to the well-being of the individual, but to the well-being of the species. And thus also, friendship and patriotism have been stigmatized, along with the family affections, as so many narrow-minded virtues, which, by their distracting influence, seduce men from that all comprehensive virtue, whose constant study being the good of the world—a happy and regenerated world, it is the fond imagination of some, would be the result of its universal prevalence among men.

5. Fortunately, nature is too strong for this speculation, which, therefore, has only its full being, in the reveries or the pages of those who, in authorship, may well be termed the philosophical novelists of our race. But, beside the actual strength of those special propensities in the heart

of man, which no generalization can overrule, there is an utter impotency in human means or human expedients, for carrying this hollow, this heartless generalization into effect. It is easy to erect into a moral axiom, the principle of greatest happiness; and then, on the strength of it, to denounce all the special affections, and propose the substitution of a universal affection in their place. But, in prosecuting the object of this last affection, what specific and intelligible thing are they to do? How shall they go about it? What conventional scheme shall men fall upon next for obtaining the maximum of utility, after they have broken loose, each from his own little home, and have been emancipated from those intense regards, which worked so effectively and with such force of concentration there? It has never been clearly shown, how the glorious simplifications of these cosmopolites admit of being practically realized—whether by a combination, of which the chance is that all men might not agree upon it; or by each, issuing quixotically forth of his own habitation, and labouring the best he may to realize the splendid conception by which he is fired and actuated. And it does not occur to those who would thus labour to extirpate the special affections from our nature, that it is in the indulgence of them that all conceivable happiness lies; and that, in being bereft of them, we should be in truth bereft of all the means and materials of enjoyment. And there is the utmost difference in point of effect, as well as in point of feeling, between the strong love wherewith nature hath endued us for a few particular men, and the general love where-

with philosophers would inspire us for man in the abstract—the former philanthropy leading to a devoted and sustained habit of well-directed exertion, for supplying the wants and multiplying the enjoyments of every separate household; the latter philanthropy, at once indefinite in its aim and intangible in its objects, overlooking every man just because charging itself with the oversight of all men. It is by a summation of particular utilities which each man, under the impulse of his own particular affections, contributes to the general good, that nature provides for the happiness of the world. But ambitious and aspiring man would take the charge of this happiness upon himself; and his first step would be to rid the heart of all its special affections—or, in other words, to unsettle the moral dynamics which nature hath established there, without any other moral dynamics, either of precise direction or of operative force, to establish in their room. After having paralyzed all the ordinary principles of action, he would, in his newly modelled system of humanity, be able to set up no principle of action whatever. His wisdom, when thus opposed to the wisdom of nature, is utterly powerless to direct, however much, in those seasons of delusion when the merest nonentities and names find a temporary sway, it may be powerful to destroy.

6. Now there is nothing which so sets off the superior skill of one artist, as the utter failure of every other artist in his attempts to improve upon it. And so the failure of every philanthropic or political experiment which proceeds on the distrust

of nature's strong and urgent and general affections, may be regarded as an impressive while experimental demonstration for the matchless wisdom of nature's God. The abortive enterprises of wild yet benevolent Utopianism; the impotent and hurtful schemes of artificial charity which so teem throughout the cities and parishes of our land; the pernicious legislation, which mars instead of medicating, whenever it intermeddles with the operations of a previous and better mechanism than its own —have all of them misgiven only because, instead of conforming to nature, they have tried to divert her from her courses, or have thwarted and traversed the strongest of her implanted tendencies. It is thus that every attempt for taking to pieces, whether totally or partially, the actual framework of society, and reconstructing it in a new way or on new principles—is altogether fruitless of good; and often fruitful of sorest evil both to the happiness and virtue of the commonwealth. That economy by which the family system would have been entirely broken up; and associated men, living together in planned and regulated villages, would have laboured for the common good, and given up their children wholly undomesticated to a common education—could not have been carried into effect, without overbearing the parental affection, and other strong propensities of nature besides; and so, it was stifled in embryo, by the instant revolt of nature against it. That legislation, which, instead of overbearing, would but seduce nature from her principles, may subsist for generations—yet not without such distemper to society, as may at length

amount to utter disorganization. And this is precisely the mischief which the pauperism of England hath inflicted on the habits of English families. It hath, by the most pernicious of all bribery, relaxed the ties and obligations of mutual relationship—exonerating parents on the one hand from the care and maintenance of their own offspring; and tempting children on the other to cast off the parents who gave them birth, and, instead of an asylum gladdened by the associations and sympathies of home, consigning them for the last closing years of weakness and decrepitude to the dreary imprisonment of a poor-house. Had the beautiful arrangements of nature not been disturbed, the relative affections which she herself has implanted would have been found strong enough, as in other countries, to have secured, through the means of a domestic economy alone, a provision both for young and old, in far greater unison with both the comfort and the virtue of families. The corrupt and demoralizing system of England might well serve as a lesson to philanthropists and statesmen, of the hazard, nay of the positive and undoubted mischief, to which the best interests of humanity are exposed —when they traverse the processes of a better mechanism instituted by the wisdom of God, through the operation of another mechanism devised by a wisdom of their own.

7. And those family relations in which all men necessarily find themselves at the outset of life, serve to strengthen, if they do not originate certain other subsequent affections of wider operation, and which bear with most important effect on the state and

security of a commonwealth. Each man's house may be regarded as a preparatory school, where he acquires in boyhood, those habits of subordination and dependence and reverence for superiors, by which he all the more readily conforms in after-life, to the useful gradations of rank and authority and wealth which obtain in the order of general society. We are aware of a cosmopolitism that would unsettle those principles which bind together the larger commonwealth of a state; and that too with still greater force and frequency, than it would unsettle those affections which bind together the little commonwealth of a family. It is easier to undermine in the hearts of subjects, their reverence for rank and station; than it is to dissolve the ties of parentage and brotherhood, or to denaturalize the hearts of children. Accordingly we may remember those seasons, when, in the form of what may be termed a moral epidemic, a certain spirit of lawlessness went abroad upon the land; and the minds of men were set at large from the habit of that homage and respect, which in more pacific times, they, without pusillanimity and in spite of themselves, do render to family or fortune or office in society. We know that in specific instances, an adequate cause is too often given, why men should cast off that veneration for rank by which they are naturally and habitually actuated—as, individually, when the prince or the noble, however elevated, may have disgraced himself by his tyranny or his vices; or, generally, when the patrician orders of the state may have entered into some guilty combination of force and fraud against the liberties of

mankind, and outraged nature is called forth to a generous and wholesome re-action against the oppressors of their species. This is the revolt of one natural principle against the abuse of another. But the case is very different—when, instead of an hostility resting on practical grounds and justified by the abuses of a principle, there is a sort of theoretical yet withal virulent and inflamed hostility abroad in the land against the principle itself—when wealth and rank without having abused their privileges, are made *per se* the objects of a jealous and resentful malignity—when the people all reckless and agog, because the dupes of designing and industrious agitators, have been led to regard every man of affluence or station as their natural enemy—and when, with the bulk of the community in this attitude of stout and sullen defiance, authority is weakened and all the natural influences of rank and wealth are suspended. Now nature never gives more effectual demonstration of her wisdom, than by the mischief which ensues on the abjuration of her own principles; and never is the lesson thus held forth more palpable and convincing, than when respect for station and respect for office cease to be operating principles in society. We are abundantly sensible that both mighty possessions and the honours of an illustrious ancestry may be disjoined from individual talent and character—nay, that they may meet in the person of one so utterly weak or worthless, as that our reverence because of the adventitious circumstances in which he is placed, may be completely overborne by our contempt either for the imbecility or the moral turpi-

tude by which he is deformed. But this is only the example of a contest between two principles, and of a victory by the superior over the inferior one. We are not, however, because of the inferiority of a principle to lose sight of its existence; or to betray such an imperfect discernment and analysis of the human mind, as to deny the reality of any one principle, because liable to be modified, or kept in check, or even for the time rendered altogether powerless, by the interposition and the conflict of another principle. If, on the one hand, rank may be so disjoined from righteousness as to forfeit all its claims to respect—on the other hand, to be convinced that these claims are the objects of a natural and universal acknowledgment, and have therefore a foundation in the actual constitution of human nature, let us only consider the effect, when pre-eminent rank and pre-eminent or even but fair and ordinary righteousness, meet together in the person of the same individual. The effect of such a composition upon human feelings may well persuade us that, while a respect for righteousness admitted by all enters as one ingredient, a respect for rank has its distinct and substantive being also as another ingredient. We have the former ingredient by itself in a state of separation, and are therefore most sensible of its presence, when the object of contemplation is a virtuous man. But we are distinctly sensible to the superaddition of the latter ingredient, when, instead of a virtuous man, the object of contemplation is a virtuous monarch—though it becomes more palpable still, when it too is made to exist in a state of separation, which it

does, when the monarch is neither hateful for his vices nor very estimable for his virtues; but stands forth in the average possession of those moralities and of that intellect which belong to common and every day humanity. Even such a monarch has only to appear among his subjects; and, in all ordinary times, he will be received with the greetings of an honest and heartfelt loyalty, when any unwonted progress through his dominions is sure to be met all over the land, by the acclamations of a generous enthusiasm. Even the sturdiest demagogue, if he come within the sphere of the royal presence, cannot resist the infection of that common sentiment by which all are actuated; but, as if struck with a moral impotency, he also, carried away by the fascination, is constrained to feel and to acknowledge its influence. Some there are, who might affect to despise human nature for such an exhibition, and indignantly exclaim that men are born to be slaves. But the truth is, that there is nothing prostrate, nothing pusillanimous in the emotion at all. Instead of this, it is a lofty chivalrous emotion, of which the most exalted spirits are the most susceptible, and which all might indulge without any forfeiture of their native or becoming dignity. We do not affirm of this respect either for the sovereignty of an empire, or for the chieftainship of a province—that it forms an original or constituent part of our nature. It is enough for our argument, if it be a universal result of the circumstances in every land, where such gradations of power and property are established. In a word, it is the doing of nature, and not of man;

and if man, in the proud and presumptuous exercise of his own wisdom, shall lift his rebel hand against the wisdom of nature, and try to uproot this principle from human hearts—he will find that it cannot be accomplished, without tearing asunder one of the strongest of those ligaments, which bind together the component parts of human society into an harmonious and well-adjusted mechanism. And it is then that the wisdom which made nature, will demonstrate its vast superiority over the wisdom which would mend it—when the desperate experiment of the latter has been tried and found wanting. There are certain restraining forces (and reverence for rank and station is one of them) which never so convincingly announce their own importance to the peace and stability of the commonwealth, as in those seasons of popular frenzy, when, for a time, they are slackened or suspended. For it is then that the vessel of the state, as if slipped from her moorings, drifts headlong among the surges of insurrectionary violence, till, as the effect of this great national effervescence, the land mourns over its ravaged fields and desolated families; when, after the sweeping anarchy has blown over it, and the sore chastisement has been undergone, the now schooled and humbled people seek refuge anew in those very principles, which they had before traduced and discarded: And it will be fortunate if, when again settled down in the quietude of their much needed and much longed-for repose, there be not too vigorous a re-action of those conservative influences, which, in the moment of their wantonness, they had flung so recklessly

away—in virtue of which the whips may become scorpions, and the mild and well-balanced monarchy may become a grinding despotism.

8. Next to the wisdom which nature discovers in her implantation or development of those affections, by which society is parcelled down into separate families; is the wisdom which she discovers in those other affections, by which the territory of a nation, and all upon it that admits of such a distribution, is likewise parcelled and broken off into separate properties. Both among the analysts of the human mind, and among metaphysical jurists and politicians, there is to be found much obscure and unsatisfactory speculation respecting those principles, whether elementary or complex, by which property is originated and by which property is upholden. We are not called to enter upon any subtle analysis for the purpose of ascertaining either what that is which gives birth to the possessory feeling on the part of an owner, or what that is which leads to such a universal recognition and respect for his rights in general society. It will be enough if we can evince that neither of these is a factitious product, devised by the wisdom or engendered by the authority of patriots and legislators, deliberating on what was best for the good and order of a community; but that both of them are the results of a prior wisdom, employed, not in framing a constitution for a state, but in framing a constitution for human nature. It will suffice to demonstrate this, if we can show, that, in very early childhood, there are germinated both a

sense of property and a respect for the property of others; and that, long before the children have been made the subjects of any artificial training on the thing in question, or are at all capable of any anticipation, or even wish, respecting the public and collective well-being of the country at large. Just as the affection of a mother is altogether special, and terminates upon the infant, without any calculation as to the superiority of the family system over the speculative systems of the cosmopolites; and just as the appetite of hunger impels to the use of food, without the least regard, for the time being, to the support or preservation of the animal economy—so, most assuredly, do the desires or notions of property, and even the principles by which it is limited, spring up in the breasts of children, without the slightest apprehension, on their part, of its vast importance to the social economy of the world. It is the provision, not of man, but of God.

9. That is my property, to the use and enjoyment of which I, without the permission of others, am free, in a manner that no other is; and it is mine and mine only, in as far as this use and enjoyment are limited to myself—and others, apart from any grant or permission by me, are restrained from the like use and the like enjoyment. Now the first tendency of a child, instead of regarding only certain things, as those to the use and enjoyment of which it alone is free, is to regard itself as alike free to the use and enjoyment of all things. We should say that it regards the whole of external nature as a vast common, but for

this difference—that, instead of regarding nature as free to all, it rather regards it as free to itself alone. When others intermeddle with any one thing, in a way that suits not its fancy or pleasure, it resents and storms and exclaims like one bereft of its rights—so that, instead of regarding the universe as a common, it were more accurate to say, that it regarded the whole as its own property, or itself as the universal proprietor of all on which it may have cast a pleased or a wishful eye. Whatever it grasps, it feels to be as much its own as it does the fingers which grasp it. And not only do its claims extend to all within its reach, but to all within the field of its vision—insomuch, that it will even stretch forth its hands to the moon in the firmament; and wreak its displeasure on the nurse, for not bringing the splendid bauble within its grasp. Instead then of saying, that, at this particular stage, it knows not how to appropriate any thing, it were more accurate to say that, a universal tyrant and monopolist, it would claim and appropriate all things—exacting from the whole of nature a subserviency to its caprices; and, the little despot of its establishment, giving forth its intimations and its mandates, with the expectation, and often with the real power and authority of instant obedience. We before said that its anger was coextensive with the capacity of sensation; and we now say that, whatever its rectified notion of property may be, it has the original notion of an unlimited range over which itself at least may expatiate, without let or contradiction—the self-constituted proprietor of a domain, wide as its

desires, and on which none may interfere against its will, without awakening in its bosom, somewhat like the sense and feeling of an injurious molestation.*

10. And it is instructive to observe the process, by which this original notion of property is at length rectified into the subsequent notion, which obtains in general society. For this purpose we must inquire what the circumstances are which limit and determine that sense of property, which was quite general and unrestricted before, to certain special things, of which the child learns to feel that they are peculiarly its own—and that too, in a manner which distinguishes them from all other things, which are not so felt to be its own. The child was blind to any such distinction before —its first habit being to arrogate and monopolize all things; and the question is, what those circumstances are, which serve to signalize some things, to which, its feelings of property, now withdrawn from wide and boundless generality, are exclusively and specifically directed. It will make conclusively

* From what has been already said of resentment, it would appear, that the instinctive feeling of property, and instinctive anger are in a state of co-relation with each other. It is by offence being rendered to the former, that the latter is called forth. Anterior to a sense of justice, our disposition is to arrogate every thing—and it is then that we are vulnerable to anger from all points of the compass. Let another meddle, to our annoyance, with any thing whatever, at this early stage, and we shall feel the very emotion of anger, which in a higher stage of moral and mental cultivation, is only called forth by his meddling with that which really and rightfully belongs to us. The sense of justice, instead of originating either the emotion of anger, or a sense of property, has the effect to limit and restrain both.

for our argument, if it shall appear, that this sense of property, even in its posterior and rectified form, is the work of nature, operating on the hearts of children; and not the work of man, devising, in the maturity of his political wisdom, such a regulated system of things, as might be best for the order and well-being of society.

11. This matter then might be illustrated by the contests of very young children, and by the manner in which these are adjusted to the acquiescence and satisfaction of them all. We might gather a lesson even from the quarrel which sometimes arises among them, about a matter so small as their right to the particular chairs of a room. If one for example, have just sat on a chair, though only for a few minutes, and then left it for a moment—it will feel itself injured, if, on returning, it shall find the chair in the possession of another occupier. The brief occupation which it has already had, gives it the feeling of a right to the continued occupation of it—insomuch, that, when kept out by an intruder, it has the sense of having been wrongously dispossessed. The particular chair of which it was for some time the occupier, is the object of a special possessory affection or feeling, which it attaches to no other chair; and by which it stands invested in its own imagination, as being, for the time, the only rightful occupier. This then may be regarded as a very early indication of that possessory feeling, which is afterwards of such extensive influence in the economy of social life—a feeling so strong, as often of itself to constitute a plea, not only sufficient in the apprehension

of the claimant, but sufficient in the general sense of the community, for substantiating the right of many a proprietor.

12. But there is still another primitive ingredient which enters into this feeling of property; and we call it primitive, because anterior to the sanctions or the application of law. Let the child in addition to the plea that it had been the recent occupier of the chair in question, be able further to advance in argument for its right—that, with its own hands, it had just placed it beside the fire, and thereby given additional value to the occupation of it. This reason is both felt by the child itself, and will be admitted by other children even of a very tender age, as a strengthener of its claim. It exemplifies the second great principle on which the natural right of property rests—even that every man is proprietor of the fruit of his own labour; and that to whatever extent he may have impressed additional value on any given thing by the work of his own hands, to that extent, at least, he should be held the owner of it.

13. This then seems the way, in which the sense of his right to any given thing arises in the heart of the claimant; but something more must be said to account for the manner in which this right is deferred to by his companions. It accounts for the manner, in which the possessory feeling arises in the hearts of one and all of them, when similarly circumstanced; but it does not account for the manner in which this possessory feeling, in the heart of each, is respected by all his fellows—so that he is suffered to remain, in the secure and

unmolested possession of that which he rightfully claims. The circumstances which originate the sense of property, serve to explain this one fact, the existence of a possessory feeling, in the heart of every individual who is actuated thereby. But the deference rendered to this feeling by any other individuals, is another and a distinct fact; and we must refer to a distinct principle from that of the mere sense of property, for the explanation of it. This new or distinct principle is a sense of equity —or that which prompts to likeness or equality, between the treatment which I should claim of others and my treatment of them; and in virtue of which, I should hold it unrighteous and unfair, if I disregarded or inflicted violence on the claim of another, which, in the same circumstances with him, I am conscious that I should have felt, and would have advanced for myself. Had I been the occupier of that chair, in like manner with the little claimant who is now insisting on the possession of it, I should have felt and claimed precisely as he is doing. Still more, had I like him placed it beside the fire, I should have felt what he is now expressing—a still more distinct and decided right to it. If conscious of an identity of feeling between me and another in the same circumstances—then let my moral nature be so far evolved as to feel the force of this consideration; and, under the operation of a sense of equity, I shall defer to the very claim, which I should myself have urged, had I been similarly placed. And it is marvellous, how soon the hearts of children discover a sensibility to this consideration, and how soon they are capable of

becoming obedient to the power of it. It is, in fact, the principle on which a thousand contests of the nursery are settled, and many thousand more are prevented; what else would be an incessant scramble of rival and ravenous cupidity, being mitigated and reduced to a very great, though unknown and undefinable extent, by the sense of justice coming into play. It is altogether worthy of remark, however, that the sense of property is anterior to the sense of justice, and comes from an anterior and distinct source in our nature. It is not justice which originates the proprietary feeling in the heart of any individual. It only arbitrates between the proprietary claims and feelings of different individuals—after these had previously arisen by the operation of other principles in the human constitution. Those writers on jurisprudence are sadly and inextricably puzzled, who imagine that justice presided over the first ordinations of property —utterly at a loss as they must be, to find out the principle that could guide her initial movements. Justice did not create property; but found it already created—her only office being to decide between the antecedent claims of one man and another: And, in the discharge of this office, she but compares the rights which each of them can allege, as founded either on the length of undisputed and undisposed of possession, or on the value they had impressed on the thing at issue by labour of their own. In other words, she bears respect to those two great primitive ingredients by which property is constituted, before that she had ever bestowed any attention, or given any award what-

ever regarding it. The matter may be illustrated by the peculiar relation in which each man stands to his own body, as being, in a certain view, the same with the peculiar relation in which each man stands to his own property. His sensitive feelings are hurt, by the infliction of a neighbour's violence upon the one; and his proprietary feelings are hurt, by the encroachment of a neighbour's violence upon the other. But justice no more originated the proprietary, than it did the sensitive feelings—no more gave me the peculiar affection which I feel for the property I now occupy as my own, than it gave me my peculiar affection for the person which I now occupy as my own. Justice pronounces on the iniquity of any hurtful infliction by us on the person of another—seeing that such an infliction upon our own person, to which we stand similarly related, would be resented by ourselves. And Justice, in like manner, pronounces on the inequality or iniquity of any hurtful encroachment by us on the property of another—also seeing, that such an encroachment upon our own property, to which we stand similarly related, would be felt and resented by ourselves. Man feels one kind of pain, when the hand which belongs to him is struck by another; and he feels another kind of pain, when some article which it holds, and which he conceives to belong to him, is wrested by another from its grasp. But it was not Justice which instituted either the animal economy in the one case, or the proprietary economy in the other. Justice found them both already instituted. Property is not the creation of justice; but is in truth

a prior creation. Justice did not form this material, or command it into being; but in the course of misunderstanding or controversy between man and man, property, a material pre-existent or already made, forms the subject of many of those questions which are put into her hands.

14. But, recurring to the juvenile controversy which we have already imagined for the purpose of illustration, there is still a third way in which we may conceive it to be conclusively and definitively settled. The parents may interpose their authority, and assign his own particular chair to each member of the household. The instant effect of such a decree, in fixing and distinguishing the respective properties in all time coming, has led, we believe, to a misconception regarding the real origin of property—in consequence of a certain obscure analogy between this act of parents or legislators over the family of a household, and a supposed act of rulers or legislators over the great family of a nation. Now, not only have the parents this advantage over the magistrates—that the property which they thus distribute is previously their own; but there is both a power of enforcement and a disposition to acquiescence within the limits of a home, which exist in an immeasurably weaker degree within the limits of a kingdom. Still, with all this superiority on the part of the household legislators, it would even be their wisdom, to conform their decree as much as possible to those natural principles and feelings of property, which had been in previous exercise

among their children—to have respect, in fact, when making distribution of the chairs, both to their habits of previous occupation, and to the additional value which any of them may have impressed upon their favourite seats, by such little arts of upholstery or mechanics, as they are competent to practise. A wise domestic legislator would not thwart, but rather defer to the claims and expectations which nature had previously founded. And still more a national legislator or statesman, would evince his best wisdom, by, instead of traversing the constitution of property which nature had previously established, greatly deferring to that sense of a possessory right, which long and unquestioned occupation so universally gives; and greatly deferring to the principle, that, whatever the fruit of each man's labour may be, it rightfully, and therefore should legally belong to him. A government could, and at the termination of a revolutionary storm, often does, traverse these principles; but not without the excitement of a thousand heart-burnings, and so the establishment of a strong counteraction to its own authority in the heart of its dominions. It is the dictate of sound policy—that the natural, on the one hand, and the legal or political on the other, should quadrate as much as possible. And thus, instead of saying with Dr. Paley that property derived its constitution and being from the law of the land—we should say that law never exhibits a better understanding of her own place and functions, than when, founding on materials already provided,

she feels that her wisest part is but to act as an auxiliary, and to ratify that prior constitution which nature had put into her hands.

15. In this exposition which we have now attempted of the origin and rights of property, we are not insensible to the mighty use of law. By its power of enforcement, it perpetuates or defends from violation that existent order of things which itself had established, or, rather, which itself had ratified. Even though at its first ordinations it had contravened those natural principles which enter into the foundation of property, these very principles will, in time, re-appear in favour of the new system, and yield to it a firmer and a stronger support with every day of its continuance. Whatever fraud or force may have been concerned at the historical commencement of the present and actual distribution of property—the then new possessors have at length become old; and, under the canopy and protection of law, the natural rights have been superadded to the factitious or the political. Law has guaranteed to each proprietor a long continued occupation, till a strong and inveterate possessory feeling has taken root and arisen in every heart. And secure of this occupation, each may, in the course of years, have mixed up to an indefinite amount, the improvements of his own skill and labour with those estates—which, as the fruit whether of anarchy or of victorious invasion, had fallen into his hands. So that these first and second principles of natural jurisprudence, whatever violence may have been done to them at the overthrow of a former regime, are again

fostered into all their original efficacy and strength during the continuance of a present one. Insomuch, that if, at the end of half a century, those outcasts of a great revolutionary hurricane, the descendants of a confiscated noblesse, were to rally and combine for the recovery of their ancient domains—they would be met in the encounter, not by the force of the existing government only, but by the outraged and resentful feelings of the existing proprietors, whose possessory and prescriptive rights, now nurtured into full and firm establishment, would, in addition to the sense of interest, enlist even the sense of justice upon their side. Apart from the physical, did we but compute the moral forces which enter into such a conflict, it will often be found that the superiority is in favour of the actual occupiers. Those feelings, on the one hand, which are associated with the recollection of a now departed ancestry and their violated rights, are found to be inoperative and feeble, when brought into comparison or collision with that strength which nature has annexed to the feelings of actual possession. Regarded as but a contest of sentiment alone, the disposition to recover is not so strong as the disposition to retain. The recollection that these were once my parental acres, though wrested from the hand of remote ancestors by anarchists and marauders, would not enlist so great or so practical a moral force on the aggressive side of a new warfare, as the reflection that these are now my possessed acres, which, though left but by immediate ancestors, I have been accustomed from infancy to call my own,

would enlist on the side of the defensive. In the course of generations, those sedative influences, which tend to the preservation of the existing order wax stronger and stronger; and those disturbing influences, which tend to the restoration of the ancient order, wax weaker and weaker—till man at last ceases to charge himself with a task so infinitely above his strength, as the adjustment of the quarrels and the accumulated wrongs of the centuries which have gone by. In other words, the constitution of law in regard to property, which is the work of man, may be so framed as to sanction, and, therefore, to encourage the enormities which have been perpetrated by the force of arms —while the constitution of the mind in regard to property, which is the work of nature, is so framed, as, with conservative virtue, to be altogether on the side of perpetuity and peace.

16. Had a legislator of supreme wisdom and armed with despotic power been free to establish the best scheme for augmenting the wealth and the comforts of human society—he could have devised nothing more effectual than that existing constitution of property, which obtains so generally throughout the world; and by which, each man, secure within the limits of his own special and recognised possession, might claim as being rightly and originally his, the fruit of all the labour which he may choose to expend upon it. But this was not left to the discovery of man, or to any ordinations of his consequent upon that discovery. He was not led to this arrangement by the experience of its consequences; but prompted to it by certain

feelings, as much prior to that experience, as the appetite of hunger is prior to our experience of the use of food. In this matter, too, the wisdom of nature has anticipated the wisdom of man, by providing him with original principles of her own. Man was not left to find out the direction in which his benevolence might be most productive of enjoyment to others; but he has been irresistibly, and, as far as he is concerned, blindly impelled thereto by means of a family affection—which, concentrating his efforts on a certain few, has made them a hundred times more prolific of benefit to mankind than if all had been left to provide the best they may for the whole, without a precise or determinate impulse to any. And in like manner, man was not left to find out the direction in which his industry might be made most productive of the materials of enjoyment; but, with the efforts of each concentrated by means of a special possessory affection on a certain portion of the territory, the universal produce is incalculably greater than under a medley system of indifference, with every field alike open to all, and, therefore, alike unreclaimed from the wilderness—unless one man shall consent to labour in seed time, although another should reap the fruit of his labour in harvest. It is good that man was not trusted with the whole disentanglement of this chaos—but that a natural jurisprudence, founded on the constitution of the human mind, so far advances and facilitates the task of that artificial jurisprudence, which frames the various codes or constitutions of human law. It is well that nature has connected with the past

and actual possession of any thing, so strong a sense of right to its continued possession; and that she has so powerfully backed this principle, by means of another as strongly and universally felt as the former, even that each man has a right to possess the fruit of his own industry. The human legislator has little more to do than to confirm, or rather to promulgate and make known his determination to abide by principles already felt and recognised by all men. Wanting these, he could have fixed nothing, he could have perpetuated nothing. The legal constitution of every state, in its last and finished form, comes from the hand of man. But the great and natural principles, which secure for these constitutions the acceptance of whole communities—implanted in man from his birth, or at least evincing their presence and power in very early childhood—these are what bespeak the immediate hand of God.

17. But these principles, strongly conservative though they be, on the side of existing property do not at all times prevent a revolution—which is much more frequently, however, a revolution of power than of property. But when such is the degree of violence abroad in society, that even the latter is effected—this most assuredly, does not arise from any decay or intermission of the possessory feelings, that we have just been expounding; but from the force and fermentation of other causes which prevail in opposition to these, and in spite of them. And, after that such revolution has done its work and ejected the old dynasty of proprietors, the mischief to them may be as irre-

coverable, as if their estates had been wrested from them, by an irruption from the waters of the ocean, by earthquake, or the sweeping resistless visitation of any other great physical calamity. The moral world has its epochs and its transitions as well as the natural, during which the ordinary laws are not suspended but only for the time overborne; but this does not hinder the recurrence and full reinstatement of these laws during the long eras of intermediate repose. And it is marvellous, with what certainty and speed, the conservative influences, of which we have treated, gather around a new system of things, with whatever violence, and even injustice, it may have been ushered into the world—insomuch that, under the guardianship of the powers which be, those links of a natural jurisprudence, now irretrievably torn from the former, are at length transferred in all their wonted tenacity to the existing proprietors; rivetting each of them to his own several property, and altogether establishing a present order of as great firmness and strength as ever belonged to the order which went before it, but which is now superseded and forgotten. It is well that nature hath annexed so potent a charm to actual possession; and a charm which strengthens with every year and day of its continuance. This may not efface the historical infamy of many ancient usurpations. But the world cannot be kept in a state of perpetual effervescence; and now that the many thousand wrongs of years gone by, as well as the dead on whom they have been inflicted, are fading into deep oblivion—it is well for the repose of its living

generations, that, in virtue of the strong possessory feelings which nature causes to arise in the hearts of existing proprietors and to be sympathized with by all other men, the possessors *de facto* have at length the homage done to them of possessors *de jure;* strong in their own consciousness of right, and strong in the recognition thereof by all their contemporaries.

18. But ere we have completed our views upon this subject, we must shortly dwell on a principle of very extensive application in morals; and which itself forms a striking example of a most beauteous and beneficent adaptation in the constitution of the human mind to the needs and the well-being of human society. It may be thus announced, briefly and generally:—however strong the special affections of our nature may be, yet, if along with them there be but a principle of equity in the mind, then, these affections, so far from concentrating our selfish regards upon their several objects to the disregard and injury of others, will but enhance our respect and our sympathy for the like affections in other men.

19. This may be illustrated, in the first instance, by the equity observed between man and man, in respect to the bodies which they wear—endowed, as we may suppose them to be, with equal, at least with like capacities of pain and suffering from external violence. To inflict that very pain upon another which I should resent or shrink from in agony, if inflicted upon myself—this to all sense of justice appears a very palpable iniquity. Let us now conceive then, that the sentient framework

of each of the parties was made twice more sensitive, or twice more alive to pain and pungency of feeling than it actually is. In one view it may be said that each would become twice more selfish than before. Each would feel a double interest in warding off external violence from himself; and so be doubly more anxious for his own protection and safety. But, with the very same moral nature as ever, each, now aware of the increased sensibility, not merely in himself but in his fellows, would feel doubly restrained from putting forth upon him a hand of violence. So, grant him to have but a sense of equity—and, exactly in proportion as he became tender of himself, would he become tender of another also. If the now superior exquisiteness of his own frame afforded him a topic, on which, what may be called his selfishness would feel more intensely than before—the now superior exquisiteness of another's frame would, in like manner, afford a topic, on which his sense of justice would feel more intensely than before. It is even as when men of very acute sensibilities company together—each has, on that very account, a more delicate and refined consideration for the feelings of all the rest; and it is only among men of tougher pellicle and rigid fibre, where coarseness and freedom prevail, because there coarseness and freedom are not felt to be offensive. Grant but a sense of equity—and the very fineness of my sensations which weds me so much more to the care and the defence of my own person, would also, on the imagination of a similar fineness in a fellow-man, restrain me so much more from the putting

forth of any violence upon his person. If I had any compassion at all, or any horror at the injustice of inflicting upon another, that which I should feel to be a cruelty, if inflicted upon myself—I would experience a greater recoil of sympathy from the blow that was directed to the surface of a recent wound upon another, precisely as I would feel a severer agony in a similar infliction upon myself. So, there is nothing in the quickness of my physical sensibilities, and by which I am rendered more alive to the care and the guardianship of my own person—there is nothing in this to blunt, far less to extinguish my sensibilities for other men. Nay, it may give a quicker moral delicacy to all the sympathies which I before felt for them. And especially, the more sensitive I am to the hurts and the annoyances which others bring upon my own person, the more scrupulous may I be of being in any way instrumental to the hurt or the annoyance of others.

20. The same holds true between man and man, not merely of the bodies which they wear, but of the families which belong to them. Each man, by nature, hath a strong affection for his own offspring —the young whom he hath reared, and with whom the daily habit of converse under the same roof, hath strengthened all the original affinities that subsisted between them. But one man a parent knows that another man, also a parent, is actuated by the very same appropriate sensibilities towards his offspring; and nought remains but to graft on these separate and special affections in each, a sympathy between one neighbour and another;

that there might be a mutual respect for each other's family affections. After the matter is advanced thus far, we can be at no loss to perceive, that, in proportion to the strength of the parental affection with each, will be the strength of the fellow-feeling that each has with the affection of the other—insomuch that he who bears in his heart the greatest tenderness for his own offspring, would feel the greatest revolt against an act of severity towards the offspring of his friend. Now it is altogether so with the separate and original sense of property in each of two neighbours, and a sense of justice grafted thereupon—even as a mutual neighbourlike sympathy may be grafted on the separate family affections. One man a proprietor, linked by many ties with that which he hath possessed and been in the habitual use and management of for years, is perfectly conscious of the very same kind of affinity, between another man a proprietor and that which belongs to him. It is not the justice which so links him to his own property, any more than it is the sympathy with his neighbour which has linked him to his own children. But the justice hath given him a respectful feeling for his neighbour's rights, even as the sympathy would give him a tenderness for his neighbour's offspring. And so far from there being aught in the strength of the appropriating principle that relaxes this deference to the rights of his neighbour, the second principle may in fact grow with the growth, and strengthen with the strength of the first one.

21. For the purpose of maintaining an equitable

regard, or an equitable conduct to others—it is no more necessary that we should reduce or extirpate the special affections of our nature, than that, in order to make room for the love of another, we should discharge from the bosom all love of ourselves. So far from this, the affection we have for ourselves, or for those various objects which by the constitution of our nature we are formed to seek after and to delight in—is the measure of that duteous regard which we owe to others, and of that duteous respect which we owe to all their rights and all their interests. The very highest behest of social morality, while at the same time the most comprehensive of its rules, is that we should love our neighbour as we do ourselves. Love to our neighbour is the thing which this rule measures off—and love to ourselves is the thing which it measures by. These two then, the social and the selfish affections, instead of being as they too often are inversely, might under a virtuous regimen be directly proportional to each other. At all events the way to advance or magnify the one, is not surely to weaken or abridge the other. The strength of certain prior affections which by nature we do have, is the standard of certain posterior affections which morality tells that we ought to have. Morality neither planted these prior affections, nor does she enjoin us to extirpate them. They were inserted by the hand of nature for the most useful purposes; and morality, instead of demolishing her work, applies the rule and compass to it for the construction of her own.

22. It was not justice which presided over the

original distribution of property. It was not she who assigned to each man his separate field, any more than it was she who assigned to each man his separate family. It was nature that did both, by investing with such power those anterior circumstances of habit and possession, which gave rise—first, to the special love that each man bears to his own children, and secondly, to the special love that each man bears to his own acres. Had there been no such processes beforehand, for thus isolating the parental regards of each on that certain household group which nature placed under his roof, and the proprietary regards of each on that certain local territory which history casts into his possession: or, had each man been so constituted, that, instead of certain children whom he felt to be his own, he was alike loose to them or susceptible of a like random and indiscriminate affection for any children; or, instead of certain lands which he felt to be his own, he was alike loose to them or susceptible of a like tenacious adherence to any lands—had such been the rudimental chaos which nature put into the hands of man for the exercise of his matured faculties, neither his morality nor his wisdom would have enabled him to unravel it. But nature prepared for man an easier task; and when justice arose to her work, she found a territory so far already partitioned, and each proprietor linked by a strong and separate tie of peculiar force to that part which he himself did occupy. She found this to be the land which one man wont to possess and cultivate, and that to be the land which another man wont to possess and cultivate—the destination,

not originally, of justice, but of accident, which her office nevertheless is not to reverse, but to confirm. We hold it a beautiful part of our constitution, that, the firmer the tenacity wherewith the first man adheres to his own, once that justice takes her place among the other principles of his nature, the prompter will be his recognition of the second man's right to his own. If each man sat more loosely to his own portion, each would have viewed more loosely the right of his neighbour to the other portion. The sense of property, anterior to justice, exists in the hearts of all; and the principle of justice, subsequent to property, does not extirpate these special affections, but only arbitrates between them. In proportion to the felt strength of the proprietary affection in the hearts of each; will be the strength of that deference which each, in so far as justice has the mastery over him, renders to the rights and the property of his neighbour. These are the principles of the *histoire raisonnée*, that has been more or less exemplified in all the countries of the world; and which might still be exemplified in the appropriation of a desert island. If we had not had the prior and special determinations of nature, justice would have felt the work of appropriation to be an inextricable problem. If we had not had justice, with each man obeying only the impulse of his own affections and unobservant of the like affection of others, we should have been kept in a state of constant and interminable war. Under the guidance of nature and justice together, the whole earth might have been parcelled out, without conflict and without interference.

23. If a strong self-interest in one's person may not only be consistent with, but, by the aid of the moral sense, may be conducive to a proportionally strong principle of forbearance from all injury to the persons of other men—why may not the very same law be at work in regard to property as to person? The fondness wherewith one nourishes and cherishes his own flesh, might, we have seen, enhance his sympathy and his sense of justice for that of other men; and so, we affirm, might it be of the fondness wherewith one nourishes and cherishes his own field. The relation in which each man stands to his own body, was anterior to the first dawnings of his moral nature; and his instinctive sensibilities of pain and suffering, when any violence is inflicted, were also anterior. But as his moral perceptions expand, and he considers others beside himself who are similarly related to their bodies—these very susceptibilities not only lead him to recoil from the violence that is offered to himself; but they lead him to refrain from the offering of violence to other men. They may have an air of selfishness at the first; yet so far from being obstacles in the way of justice, they are indispensable helps to it. And so may each man stand related to a property as well as to a person; and by ties that bind him to it, ere he thought of his neighbour's property at all—by instinctive affections, which operated previously to a sense of justice in his bosom; and yet which, so far from acting as a thwart upon his justice to others, give additional impulse to all his observations of it. He feels what has passed within his own bosom, in reference to the field that

he has possessed, and has laboured, and that has for a time been respected by society as his; and he is aware of the very same feeling in the breast of a neighbour in relation to another field; and in very proportion to the strength of his own feeling, does he defer to that of his fellow-men. It is at this point that the sense of justice begins to operate —not for the purpose of leading him to appropriate his own, for this he has already done; but for the purpose of leading him to respect the property of others. It was not justice which gave to either of them at the first that feeling of property, which each has in his own separate domain; any more than it was justice which gave to either of them that feeling of affection which each has for his own children. It is after, and not before these feelings are formed, that justice steps in with her golden rule, of not doing to others as we would not others to do unto us; and, all conscious as we are of the dislike and resentment we should feel on the invasion of our property, it teaches to defer to a similar dislike and a similar resentment in other men. And, so far from this original and instinctive regard for this property which is my own serving at all to impair, when once the moral sense comes into play, it enhances my equitable regard for the property of others. It is just with me the proprietor, as it is with me the parent. My affection for my own family does not prompt me to appropriate the family of another; but it strengthens my sympathetic consideration for the tenderness and feeling of their own parent towards them. My affection for my own field does not incline me to

seize upon that of another man; but it strengthens my equitable consideration for all the attachments and the claims which its proprietor has upon it. In proportion to the strength of that instinct which binds me to my own offspring, is the sympathy I feel with the tenderness of other parents. In proportion to the strength of that instinct which binds me to my own property, is the sense of equity I feel towards the rights of all other proprietors. It was not justice which gave either the one instinct or the other; but justice teaches each man to bear respect to that instinct in another, which he feels to be of powerful operation in his own bosom.

24. It is in virtue of my sentient nature that I am so painfully alive to the violence done upon my own body, as to recoil from the infliction of it upon myself. And it is in virtue of my moral nature, that, alive to the pain of other bodies than my own, I refrain from the infliction of it upon them. It is not justice which gives the sensations; but justice pronounces on the equal respect that is due to the sensations of all. Neither does justice give the sensations of property, but it finds them; and pronounces on the respect which each owes to the sensations of all the rest. It was not justice which gave the personal feeling; neither is it justice which gives the possessory feeling. Justice has nothing to do with the process by which this body came to be my own; and although now, perhaps, there is not a property, at least in the civilized world, which may not have passed into the hand of their actual possessors, by a series of purchases,

over which justice had the direction—yet there was a time when it might have been said, that justice has had nothing to do with the process by which this garden came to be my own; and yet, then as well as now, it would have been the utterance of a true feeling, that he who touches this garden, touches the apple of mine eye. And it is as much the dictate of justice, that we shall respect the one sensation as the other. He, indeed, who has the greatest sensitiveness, whether about his own person or his own property, will, with an equal principle of justice in his constitution, have the greatest sympathy, both for the personal and the proprietary rights of others. This view of it saves all the impracticable mysticism that has gathered around the speculations of those, who conceive of justice, as presiding over the first distributions of property; and so have fallen into the very common mistake, of trying to account for that which had been provided for by the wisdom of nature, as if it had been provided by the wisdom and the principle of man. At the first allocations of property, justice may have had no hand in them. They were altogether fortuitous. One man set himself down, perhaps on a better soil than his neighbour, and chalked out for himself a larger territory, at a time when there was none who interfered or who offered to share it with him; and so he came to as firm a possessory feeling in reference to his wider domain, as the other has in reference to his smaller. Our metaphysical jurists are sadly puzzled to account for the original inequalities of property, and for the practical acquiescence of all men in the

actual and very unequal distribution of it—having recourse to an original social compact, and to other fictions alike visionary. But if there be truth in our theory, it is just as easy to explain, why the humble proprietor, would no more think of laying claim to certain acres of his rich neighbour's estate because it was larger than his own, than he would think of laying claim to certain children of his neighbour's family because it was larger—or even of laying claim to certain parts of his neighbour's person because it was larger. He is sufficiently acquainted with his own nature to be aware, that, were the circumstances changed, he should feel precisely as his affluent neighbour does; and he respects the feeling accordingly. He knows that, if himself at the head of a larger property, he would have the same affection for all its fields that the actual proprietor has; and that, if at the head of a larger family, he would have the same affection with the actual parent for all its children. It is by making justice come in at the right place, that is, not prior to these strong affections of nature but posterior to them, that the perplexities of this inquiry are done away. The principle on which it arbitrates, is, not the comparative magnitude of the properties, but the relative feelings of each actual possessor towards each actual property; and if it find these in every instance, to be the very feelings which all men would have in the circumstances belonging to that instance—it attempts no new distribution, but gives its full sanction to the distribution which is already before it. This is the real origin and upholder of that conservative

influence which binds together the rich and the poor in society; and thus it is that property is respected throughout all its gradations.

25. It is from the treatment of an original as if it were a derived affection, that the whole obscurity on this topic has arisen. It is quite as impossible to educe the possessory feeling from an anterior sense of justice, or from a respect for law—as it is to educe the parental feeling from a previous and comprehensive regard for the interests of humanity. There is no doubt that the general good is best promoted by the play of special family affections; but this is the work of nature, and not the work of man. And there is no doubt that the wealth and comfort of society are inconceivably augmented by those influences, which bind each individual nearly as much to his own property, as he is bound to his own offspring. But in the one case as well as the other, there were certain instinctive regards that came first, and the office of justice is altogether a subsequent one; not to put these regards into the breast of any, but to award the equal deference that is due to the regards of all—insomuch that the vast domain of one individual, perhaps transmitted to him from generation to generation, throughout the lengthened series of an ancestry, whose feet are now upon the earth, but whose top reaches the clouds and is there lost in distant and obscure antiquity—is, to the last inch of its margin, under a guardianship of justice as unviolable, as that which assures protection and ownership to the humble possessor of one solitary acre. The right of property is not

the less deferred to, either because its divisions are unequal, or because its origin is unknown. And, even when history tells us that it is founded on some deed of iniquitous usurpation, there is a charm in the continued occupation, that prevails and has the mastery over our most indignant remembrance of the villany of other days. It says much for the strength of the possessory feeling, that, even in less than half a century, it will, if legal claims are meanwhile forborne, cast into obliteration, all the deeds, and even all the delinquencies, which attach to the commencement of a property. At length the prescriptive right bears every thing before it, as by the consuetude of English, by the use and wont of Scottish law. And therefore, once more, instead of saying with Dr. Paley that it is the law of the land which constitutes the basis of property—the law exhibits her best wisdom, when she founds on the materials of that basis, which nature and the common sense of mankind have laid before her.

26. Dr. Thomas Brown, we hold to have been partly right and partly wrong upon this subject. He evinces a true discernment of what may be termed the pedigree of our feelings in regard to property, when he says and says admirably well —that,* "Justice is not what constitutes property; it is a virtue which presupposes property and respects it however constituted." And further, that—"justice as a moral virtue is not the creation of property, but the conformity of our actions to

* Lecture lxxxiii.

those views of property, which vary in the various states of society." But it is not as he would affirm, it is not because obedience to a system of law, of which the evident tendency is to the public good, is the object of our moral regard—it is not this, which moralizes, if we may be allowed such an application of the term, or rather, which constitutes the virtuousness of our respect to another man's property. This is the common mistake of those moralists, who would ascribe every useful direction or habitude of man to some previous and comprehensive view taken by himself of what is best for the good of the individual or the good of society; instead of regarding such habitude as the fruit of a special tendency, impressed direct by the hand of nature, on a previous and comprehensive view taken by its author, and therefore bearing on it a palpable indication both of the goodness and the wisdom of nature's God—even as hunger is the involuntary result of man's physical constitution, and not of any care or consideration by man on the uses of food. The truth is—when, deferring to another's right of property, we do not think of the public good in the matter at all. But we are glad, in the first instance, each to possess and to use and to improve all that we are able to do without molestation, whether that freedom from molestation has been secured to us by law or by the mere circumstances of our state; and, in virtue of principles, not resulting from any anticipations of wisdom or any views of general philanthropy, (because developed in early childhood and long before we are capable of being either philanthropists or legisla-

tors) we feel a strong link of ownership with that which we have thus possessed and used, and on which we have bestowed our improvements; and we are aware that another man, in similar relation with another property, will feel towards it in like manner; and a sense of justice, or its still more significant and instructive name, of equity, suggests this equality between me and him—that, in the same manner as I would regard his encroachment on myself as injurious, so it were alike injurious in me to make a similar encroachment upon my neighbour.

27. We have expatiated thus long on the origin and rights of property—because of all subjects, it is the one, regarding which our writers on jurisprudence have sent forth the greatest amount of doubtful and unsatisfactory metaphysics. They labour and are in great perplexity to explain even the rise of the feeling or desire that is in the mind regarding it. They reason, as if the very conception of property was that, which could not have entered into the heart of man without a previous sense of justice. In this we hold them to have antedated matters wrong. The conception of property is aboriginal; and the office of justice is not to put it into any man's head; but to arbitrate among the rival feelings of cupidity, or the arrogant and overpassing claims that are apt to get into all men's heads—not to initiate man into the notion of property; but, in fact, to limit and restrain his notion of it—not to teach the creatures who at first conceive themselves to have nothing, what that is which they might call their own; but

to teach the creatures whose first and earliest tendency is to call every thing their own, what that is which they must refrain from and concede to others. When justice rises to authority among men, her office is, not to wed each individual by the link of property to that which he formerly thought it was not competent for him to use or to possess; but it is to divorce each individual from that, which it is not rightly competent for him to use or to possess—and thus restrict each to his own rightful portion. Its office in fact is restrictive, not dispensatory. The use of it is, not to give the first notion of property to those who were destitute of it, but to limit and restrain the notion with those among whom it is apt to exist in a state of overflow. The use of law, in short, the great expounder and enforcer of property, is not to instruct the men, who but for her lessons would appropriate none; but it is to restrain the men who, but for her checks and prohibitions, would monopolize all.

28. Such then seems to have been the purpose of nature in so framing our mental constitution, that we not only appropriate from the first; but feel, each, such a power in those circumstances, which serve to limit the appropriation of every one man and to distinguish them from those of others—that all, as if with common and practical consent, sit side by side together, without conflict and without interference, on their own respective portions, however unequal, of the territory in which they are placed. On the uses, the indispensable uses of such an arrangement, we need not ex-

patiate.* The hundred-fold superiority, in the amount of produce for the subsistence of human beings, which an appropriated country has over an equal extent of a like fertile but unappropriated, and, therefore, unreclaimed wilderness, is too obvious to be explained. It may be stated however; and when an economy so beneficial, without which even a few stragglers of our race could not be supported in comfort; and a large human family, though many times inferior to that which now peoples our globe, could not be supported at all—when the effect of this economy, in multiplying to a degree inconceivable the aliment of human bodies, is viewed in connexion with those prior tendencies of the human mind which gave it birth, we cannot but regard the whole as an instance, and one of the strongest which it is possible to allege, of the adaptation of external nature to that mental constitution, wherewith the Author of nature hath endowed us.

CHAPTER IV.

On those special Affections which conduce to the economic well-being of Society.

1. We now proceed to consider the economic, in contra-distinction to the civil and political well-

* This we have done at greater length in our work on Political Economy.

being of society, to the extent that this is dependent on certain mental tendencies—whether these can be demonstrated by analysis to be only secondary results, or in themselves to be simple elements of the human constitution. We may be said indeed, to have already bordered on this part of our argument—when considering the origin and the rights of property; or the manner in which certain possessory affections, that appear even in the infancy of the mind and anticipate by many years the exercise of human wisdom, lead to a better distribution, both of the earth and of all the valuables which are upon it, than human wisdom could possibly have devised, or at least than human power without the help of these special affections could have carried into effect. For there might be a useful economy sanctioned by law, yet which law could not have securely established, unless it had had a foundation in nature. For in this respect, there is a limit to the force even of the mightiest despotism—insomuch that the most absolute monarch on the face of the earth must so far conform himself, to the indelible human nature of the subjects over whom he proudly bears the sway; else, in the reaction of their outraged principles and feelings, they would hurl him from his throne. And thus it is well, that, so very generally in the different countries of the world, law, both in her respect for the possessory and acquired rights of property and in her enforcement of them, has, instead of chalking out an arbitrary path for herself, only followed where nature beforehand had pointed the way. It is far better, that, rather than

devise a jurisprudence made up of her own capricious inventions—she should, to so great an extent, have but ratified a prior jurisprudence, founded on the original or at least the universal affections of humanity. We know few things more instructive than a study of the mischievous effects, which attend a deviation from this course—of which, we at present shall state two remarkable instances. The evils which ensue when law traverses any of those principles, that lie deeply seated in the very make and constitution of the mind, bring out into more striking exhibition the superior wisdom of that nature from which she has departed—even as the original perfection of a mechanism is never more fully demonstrated, than by the contrast of those repeated failures, which shows of every change or attempted improvement, that it but deranges or deteriorates the operations of the instrument in question. And thus too it is, that a lesson of sound theology may be gathered, from the errors with their accompanying evils of unsound legislation —on those occasions when the wisdom of man comes into conflict and collision with the wisdom of God.

2. Of the two instances that we are now to produce, in which law hath made a deviation from nature, and done in consequence a tremendous quantity of evil, the first is the Tythe System of England. We do not think that the provision of her established clergy is in any way too liberal—but very much the reverse. Still we hold it signally unfortunate that it should have been levied so, as to do most unnecessary violence to the possessory

feeling, both of the owners and occupiers of land all over the country. Had the tythe, like some other of the public burdens, been commuted into a pecuniary and yearly tax on the proprietors—the possessory feeling would not have been so painfully or so directly thwarted by it. But it is the constant intromission of the tythe agents or proctors with the fields, and the *ipsa corpora* that are within the limits of the property—which exposes this strong natural affection to an annoyance that is felt to be intolerable. But far the best method of adjusting the state of the law to those principles of ownership which are anterior to law, and which all its authority is unable to quench—would be a commutation into land. Let the church property in each parish be dissevered in this way from its main territory; and then, both for the lay and the ecclesiastical domain, there would be an accordance of the legal with the possessory right. It is because these are in such painful dissonance, under the existing state of things, that there is so much exasperation in England, connected with the support and maintenance of her clergy. No doubt law can enforce her own arrangements, however arbitrary and unnatural they might be; but it is a striking exhibition, we have always thought, of the triumph of the possessory over the legal, that, in the contests between the two parties, the clergy have constantly been losing ground. And, in resistance to all the opprobrium which has been thrown upon them, do we affirm, that, with a disinterestedness which is almost heroic, they have, in deed and in practice, forborne to the average extent of at least one half,

the assertion of their claims. The truth is, that the felt odium which attaches to the system ought never to have fallen upon them. It is an inseparable consequence of the arrangement itself, by which law hath traversed nature—so as to be constantly rubbing, as it were, against that possessory feeling, which may be regarded as one of the strongest of her instincts. There are few reformations that would do more to sweeten the breath of English society, than the removal of this sore annoyance—the brooding fountain of so many heartburnings and so many festerments, by which the elements of an unappeasable warfare are ever at work between the landed interest of the country, and far the most important class of its public functionaries; and, what is the saddest perversity of all, those, whose office it is by the mild persuasions of Christianity, to train the population of our land in the lessons of love and peace and righteousness —they are forced by the necessities of a system which many of them deplore, into the attitude of extortioners; and placed in that very current, along which a people's hatred and a people's obloquy are wholly unavoidable.* Even under the theocracy of the Jews, the system of tithes was

* There is often the utmost injustice in that professional odium which is laid upon a whole order, and none have suffered more under it, than the clergy of England have, from the sweeping and indiscriminate charges, which have been preferred against them, by the demagogues of our land. We believe that nothing has given more of edge and currency to these invectives, than the very unfortunate way in which their maintenance has been provided for: and many are the amiable and accomplished individuals among themselves to whom it is a matter of downright agony.

with difficulty upholden; and many are the remonstrances which the gifted seers of Israel held with its people, for having brought of the lame and the diseased as offerings. Such, in fact, is the violence done by this system to the possessory feelings, that a conscientious submission to its exactions, may be regarded as a most decisive test of religious obedience—such an obedience, indeed, as was but ill maintained, even in the days of the Hebrew polity, although it had the force of temporal sanctions, with the miracles and manifestations of a presiding deity to sustain it. Unless by the express appointment of heaven, this yoke of Judaism, unaccompanied as it now is by the peculiar and preternatural enforcements of that dispensation, ought never to have been perpetuated in the days of Christianity. There are distinct, and, we hold, valid reasons, for the national maintenance of an order of men in the capacity of religious instructors to the people. But maintenance in a way so obnoxious to nature, is alike adverse to a sound civil and a sound Christian policy. Both the cause of religion and the cause of loyalty have suffered by it. The alienation of the church's wealth, were a deadly blow to the best and highest interests of England; but there are few things which would conduce more to the strength and peace of our nation, than a fair and right commutation of it.

3. Our next very flagrant example of a mischievous collision between the legal and the possessory, is the English system of poor laws. By law each man who can make good his plea of necessity, has

a claim for the relief of it, from the owners or occupiers of the soil, or from the owners and occupiers of houses; and never, till the end of time, will all the authority, and all the enactments of the statute-book, be able to divest them of the feeling, that their property is invaded. Law never can so counterwork the strong possessory feeling, as to reconcile the proprietors of England to this legalized enormity, or rid them of the sensation of a perpetual violence. It is this maladjustment between the voice that nature gives forth on the right of property, and the voice that arbitrary law gives forth upon it—it is this, which begets something more than a painful insecurity as to the stability of their possessions. There is besides, a positive, and what we should call, a most natural irritation. That strong possessory feeling, by which each is wedded to his own domain in the relation of its rightful proprietor; and which they can no more help, because as much a part of their original constitution, than the parental feeling by which each is wedded to his own family in the relation of its natural protector—this strong possessory feeling, we say, is, under their existing economy, subject all over England to a perpetual and most painful annoyance. And accordingly we do find the utmost acerbity of tone and temper, among the upper classes of England, in reference to their poor. We are not sure, indeed, if there be any great difference, with many of them, between the feeling which they have towards the poor, and the feeling which they have towards poachers. It is true that the law is on the side

of the one, and against the other. Yet it goes most strikingly to prove, how impossible it is for law to carry the acquiescence of the heart, when it contravenes the primary and urgent affections of nature—that paupers are in any degree assimilated to poachers in the public imagination; and that the inroads of both upon property should be resented, as if both alike were a sort of trespass or invasion.

4. And it is further interesting to observe the effect of this unnatural state of things on the paupers themselves. Even in their deportment, we might read an unconscious homage to the possessory right. And whereas, it has been argued in behalf of a poor-rate, that, so far from degrading, it sustains an independence of spirit among the peasantry, by turning that which would have been a matter of beggary into a matter of rightful and manly assertion—there is none who has attended the meetings of a parish vestry, that will not readily admit, the total dissimilarity which obtains between the assertion to a right of maintenance there, and the assertion of any other right whatever, whether on the field of war or of patriotism. There may be much of the insolence of beggary; but along with this, there is a most discernible mixture of its mean, and crouching, and ignoble sordidness. There is no common quality whatever between the clamorous onset of this worthless and dissipated crew, and the generous battle-cry *pro aris et focis*, in which the humblest of our population will join—when paternal acres, or the rights of any actually holden property are

invaded. In the mind of the pauper, with all his challenging and all his boisterousness, there is still the latent impression, that, after all, there is a certain want of firmness about his plea. He is not altogether sure of the ground upon which he is standing; and, in spite of all that law has done to pervert his imagination, the possessory right of those against whom he prefers his demand, stares him in the face, and disturbs him not a little out of that confidence, wherewith a man represents and urges the demands of unquestionable justice. In spite of himself, he cannot avoid having somewhat the look and the consciousness of a poacher. And so the effect of England's most unfortunate blunder, has been, to alienate on the one hand her rich from her poor; and on the other to debase into the very spirit and sordidness of beggary, a large and ever-increasing mass of her population. There is but one way, we can never cease to affirm, by which this grievous distemper of the body politic can be removed. And that is, by causing the law of property to harmonize with the strong and universal instincts of nature in regard to it; by making the possessory right to be at least as inviolable as the common sense of mankind would make it; and as to the poor, by utterly recalling the blunder that England made, when she turned into a matter of legal constraint, that which should ever be a matter of love and liberty, and when she aggravated ten-fold the dependence and misery of the lower classes, by divorcing the cause of humanity from the willing generosities, the spontaneous and unforced sympathies of our nature.

5. But this brings into view another of our special affections—our compassion for the distress, including, as one of its most prominent and frequently recurring objects, our compassion for the destitution of others. We have already seen, how nature hath provided, by one of its implanted affections, for the establishment of property; and for the respect in which, amid all its inequalities, it is held by society. But helpless destitution forms one extreme of this inequality, which a mere system of property appears to leave out; and which, if not otherwise provided for by the wisdom of nature in the constitution of the human mind, would perhaps justify an attempt by the wisdom of man to provide for it in the constitution of human law. We do not instance, at present, certain other securities which have been instituted by the hand of nature, and which, if not traversed and enfeebled by a legislation wholly uncalled for, would of themselves, prevent the extensive prevalence of want in society. These are the urgent law of self-preservation, prompting to industry on the one hand and to economy on the other; and the strong law of relative affection—which laws, if not tampered with and undermined in their force and efficacy by the law of pauperism, would not have relieved, but greatly better, would have prevented the vast majority of those cases which fill the workhouses, and swarm around the vestries of England. Still these, however, would not have prevented all poverty. A few instances, like those which are so quietly and manageably, but withal effectually met in the country parishes of

Scotland, would still occur in every little community, however virtuous or well regulated. And in regard to these, there is another law of the mental constitution, by which nature hath made special provision for them—even the beautiful law of compassion, in virtue of which the sight of another in agony, (and most of all perhaps in the agony of pining hunger), would, if unrelieved, create a sensation of discomfort in the heart of the observer, scarcely inferior to what he should have felt, had the suffering and the agony been his own.

6. But in England, the state, regardless of all the indices which nature had planted in the human constitution, hath taken the regulation of this matter into its own hands. By its law of pauperism, it hath, in the first instance, ordained for the poor a legal property in the soil; and thereby, running counter to the strong possessory affection, it hath done violence to the natural and original distribution of the land, and loosened the secure hold of each separate owner, on the portion which belongs to him. And in the second instance, distrustful of the efficacy of compassion, it, by way of helping forward its languid energies, hath applied the strong hand of power to it. Now it so happens, that nothing more effectually stifles compassion, or puts it to flight, than to be thus meddled with. The spirit of kindness utterly refuses the constraints of authority; and law in England, by taking the business of charity upon itself, instead of supplementing, hath well nigh destroyed the anterior provision made for it by nature—thus leaving it to be chiefly provided for, by methods

and by a machinery of its own. The proper function of law is to enforce the rights of justice, or to defend against the violation of them; and never does it make a more flagrant or a more hurtful invasion, beyond the confines of its own legitimate territory—than, when confounding humanity with justice, it would apply the same enforcements to the one virtue as to the other. It should have taken a lesson from the strong and evident distinction which nature hath made between these two virtues, in her construction of our moral system; and should have observed a corresponding distinction in its own treatment of them—resenting the violation of the one; but leaving the other to the free interchanges of good-will on the side of the dispenser, and of gratitude on the side of the recipient. When law, distrustful of the compassion that is in all hearts, enacted a system of compulsory relief, lest, in our neglect of others, the indigent should starve; it did incomparably worse, than if, distrustful of the appetite of hunger, it had enacted for the use of food a certain regimen of times and quantities, lest, neglectful of ourselves, our bodies might have perished. Nature has made a better provision than this for both these interests; but law has done more mischief by interference with the one, than it could ever have done by interference with the other. It could not have quelled the appetite of hunger, which still, in spite of all the law's officiousness, would have remained the great practical impellent to the use of food, for the well-being of our physical economy. But it has done much to quell and to overbear the affection of

compassion—that never-failing impellent, in a free and natural state of things, to deeds of charity, for the well-being of the social economy. The evils which have ensued are of too potent and pressing a character to require description. They have placed England in a grievous dilemma, from which she can only be extricated, by the new modelling of this part of her statute-book, and a nearer conformity of its provisions to the principles of natural jurisprudence. Meanwhile they afford an emphatic demonstration for the superior wisdom of nature, which is never so decisively or so triumphantly attested, as by the mischief that is done, when her processes are contravened or her principles are violated.*

7. We are aware of a certain ethical system, that would obliterate the distinction between justice and humanity, by running or resolving the one into the other—affirming of the former more particularly, that all its virtue is founded on its utility; and that therefore justice, to which may be added truth, is no further a virtue, than as it is instrumental of good to men—thus making both truth and justice, mere species or modifications of benevolence. Now, as we have already stated, it is not with the theory

* Without contending for the language of our older moralists, the distinction which they mean to express, by virtues of perfect and imperfect obligation, has a foundation in reality and in the nature of things—as between justice where the obligation on one side implies a counterpart right upon the other, and benevolence to which, whatever the obligation may be on the part of the dispenser, there is no corresponding right on the part of the recipient. The proper office of law is to enforce the former virtues. When it attempts to enforce the latter, it makes a mischievous extension of itself beyond its own legitimate boundaries.

of morals, but with the moral constitution of man that we have properly to do; and, most certain it is, that man does feel the moral rightness both of justice and truth, irrespective altogether of their consequences—or, at least, apart from any such view to these consequences at the time, as the mind is at all conscious of. There is an appetite of our sentient nature which terminates in food, and that is irrespective of all its subsequent utilities to the animal economy; and there is an appetite for doing what is right which terminates in virtue, and which bears as little respect to its utilities—whether for the good of self or for the good of society. The man whom some temptation to what is dishonourable would put into a state of recoil and restlessness, has no other aim, in the resistance he makes to it, than simply to make full acquittal of his integrity. This is his landing place; and he looks no further. There may be a thousand dependent blessings to humanity, from the observation of moral rectitude. But the pure and simple appetency for rectitude, rests upon this as its object, without any onward reference to the consequences which shall flow from it. This consideration alone is sufficient to dispose of the system of utility—as being metaphysically incorrect in point of conception, and incorrect in the expression of it. If a man can do virtuously, when not aiming at the useful, and not so much as thinking of it—then to design and execute what is useful, may be and is a virtue; but it is not all virtue.*

* If our moral judgment tell that some particular thing is right,

8. There is one way in which a theorist may take refuge from this conclusion. It is quite palpable, that a man often feels himself to be doing virtuously—when, to all sense, he is not thinking of the utilities which follow in its train. But then it may be affirmed, that he really is so thinking—although he is not sensible of it. There can be little doubt of such being the actual economy of the world, such the existing arrangement of its laws and its sequences—that virtue and happiness are very closely associated; and that, no less in those instances, where the resulting happiness is not at all thought of, than in those where happiness is the direct and declared object of the virtue. Who can doubt that truth and justice bear as manifold and as important a subserviency to the good of the species as beneficence does?—and yet it is only with the latter, that this good is the object of our immediate contemplation. But then it is affirmed, that, when two terms are constantly associated in nature, there must be as constant an association of them in the mind of the observer of nature—an association at length so habitual, and therefore so rapid, that we become utterly unconscious of it. Of this we have examples, in the

without our adverting to its utility—then though all that we hold to be morally right should be proved by observation to yield the maximum of utility, utility is not on that account the mind's criterion for the rightness of this particular thing. God hath given us the sense of what is right; and He hath besides so ordained the system of things, that what is right is generally that which is most useful—yet, in many instances, it is not the perceived usefulness, which makes us recognise it to be right. We agree too with Bishop Butler in not venturing to assume that God's sole end in creation was the production of the greatest happiness.

most frequent and familiar operations of human life. In the act of reading, every alphabetical letter must have been present to the mind—yet how many thousands of them, in the course of a single hour, must have past in fleeting succession, without so much as one moment's sense of their presence, which the mind has any recollection of. And it is the same in listening to an acquaintance, when we receive the whole meaning and effect of his discourse, without the distinct consciousness of very many of those individual words which still were indispensable to the meaning. Nay, there are other and yet more inscrutable mysteries in the human constitution; and which relate, not to the thoughts that we conceive without being sensible of them, but even to the volitions that we put forth, and to very many of which we are alike insensible. We have only to reflect on the number and complexity of those muscles which are put into action, in the mere processes of writing or walking, or even of so balancing ourselves as to maintain a posture of stability. It is understood to be at the bidding of the will, that each of our muscles performs its distinct office; and yet, out of the countless volitions, which had their part and their play, in these complicated, and yet withal most familiar and easily practicable operations—how many there are which wholly escape the eye of consciousness. And thus too, recourse may be had to the imagination of certain associating processes, too hidden for being the objects of sense at the time, and too fugitive for being the objects of remembrance afterwards. And on the strength of these it may be asked—

how are we to know, that the utility of truth and justice is not present to the mind of man, when he discharges the obligation of these virtues, and how are we to know, that it is not the undiscoverable thought of this utility, which forms the impellent principle of that undiscoverable volition, by which man is urged to the performance of them?

9. Now we are precluded from replying to this question in any other way, than that the theory which requires such an argument for its support, may be said to fetch all its materials from the region of conjecture. It ventures on the affirmation of what is going on in a terra incognita; and we have not the means within our reach, for meeting it in the terms of a positive contradiction. But we can at least say, that a mere *argumentum ab ignorantia* is not a sufficient basis on which to ground a philosophic theory; and that thus to fetch an hypothesis from among the inscrutabilities of the mind, to speak of processes going on there so quick and so evanescent that the eye of consciousness cannot discover them—is to rear a superstructure not upon the facts which lie within the limit of separation between the known and the unknown, but upon the fancies which lie without this limit. A great deal more is necessary for the establishment of an assertion, than that an adversary cannot disprove it. A thousand possibilities may be affirmed which are susceptible neither of proof nor of disproof; and surely it were the worst of logic to accept as proof, the mere circumstance that they are beyond the reach of disproof. They in fact, lie alike beyond the reach of both; in which

case they should be ranked among the figments of mere imagination, and not among the findings of experience. How are we to know but that, in the bosom of our great planetary amplitude, there do not float, and in elliptic orbits round the sun, pieces of matter vastly too diminutive for our telescopes; and that thus the large intermediate spaces between the known bodies of the system, instead of so many desolate blanks, are in fact, peopled with little worlds—all of them teeming, like our own, with busy and cheerful animation. Now, in the powerlessness of our existing telescopes, we do not know but it may be so. But we will not believe that it is so, till a telescope of power enough be invented, for disclosing this scene of wonders to our observation. And it is the same of the moral theory that now engages us. It rests, not upon what it finds among the arcana of the human spirit, but upon what it fancies to be there; and they are fancies too which we cannot deny, but which we will not admit—till, by some improved power of internal observation, they are turned into findings. We are quite sensible of the virtuousness of truth; but we have not yet been made sensible, that we always recognise this virtuousness, because of a glance we have had of the utility of truth—though only perhaps for a moment of time, too minute and microscopical for being noticed by the naked eye of consciousness. We can go no further upon this question than the light of evidence will carry us. And, while we both feel in our own bosoms and observe in the testimony of those around us, the moral deference

which is due to truth and justice—we have not yet detected this to be the same with that deference, which we render to the virtue of benevolence. Or, in other words, we do venerate and regard these as virtues—while, *for aught we know*, the utility of them is not in all our thoughts. We agree with Dugald Stewart in thinking, that, "considerations of utility do not seem to us the only ground of the approbation we bestow on this disposition." He further observes, that, "abstracting from all regard to consequences, there is something pleasing and amiable in sincerity, openness, and truth; something disagreeable and disgusting in duplicity, equivocation, and falsehood. Dr. Hutchison himself, the great patron of that theory which resolves all moral qualities into benevolence, confesses this—for he speaks of a *sense* which leads us to approve of veracity, distinct from the sense which approves of qualities useful to mankind."*

10. However difficult it may be, to resolve the objective question which respects the constitution of virtue in itself—in the subjective question, which respects the constitution of the mind, we cannot but acknowledge the broad and palpable distinction, which the Author of our moral frame hath made, between justice and truth on the one hand, and beneficence on the other. And it had been well, if lawgivers had discriminated, as nature has done, between justice and humanity—although the mischief of their unfortunate deviation serves, all the

* Stewart's "Outlines of Moral Philosophy," Art. Veracity.

more strikingly, to prove the adaptation of our moral constitution to the exigencies of human society. The law of pauperism hath assimilated beneficence to justice, by enacting the former, in the very way that it does the latter; and enforcing what it has thus enacted by penalties. Beneficence loses altogether its proper and original character—when, instead of moving on the impulse of a spontaneous kindness that operates from within, it moves on the impulse of a legal obligation from without. Should law specify the yearly sum that must pass from my hands to the destitute around me—then, it is not beneficence which has to do with the matter. What I have to surrender, law hath already ordained to be the property of another; and I, in giving it up, am doing an act of justice and not an act of liberality. To exercise the virtue of beneficence, I must go beyond the sum that is specified by law; and thus law, in her attempts to seize upon beneficence, and to bring her under rule, hath only forced her to retire within a narrower territory, on which alone it is that she can put forth the free and native characteristics which belong to her. Law, in fact, cannot, with any possible ingenuity, obtain an imperative hold on beneficence at all—for her very touch transforms this virtue into another. Should law go forth on the enterprise of arresting beneficence upon her own domain, and there laying upon her its authoritative dictates—it would find that beneficence had eluded its pursuit; and that all which it could possibly do, was to wrest from her that part of the domain of which it had taken occupation, and bring

it under the authority of justice. When it thought to enact for beneficence, it only, in truth, enacted a new division of property; and in so doing, it contravenes the possessory, one of nature's special affections—while, by its attempts to force what should have been left to the free exercise of compassion, it has done much to supersede or to extinguish another of these affections. It hath so pushed forward the line of demarcation—as to widen the space which justice might call her own, and to contract the space which beneficence might call her own. But never will law be able to make a captive of beneficence, or to lay personal arrest upon her. It might lessen and limit her means, or even starve her into utter annihilation. But never can it make a living captive of her. It is altogether a vain and hopeless undertaking to legislate on the duties of beneficence; for the very nature of this virtue, is to do good freely and willingly with its own. But on the moment that law interposes to any given extent with one's property, to that extent it ceases to be his own; and any good that is done by it is not done freely. The force of law and the freeness of love cannot amalgamate the one with the other. Like water and oil they are immiscible. We cannot translate beneficence into the statute-book of law, without expunging it from the statute-book of the heart; and, to whatever extent we make it the object of compulsion, to that extent we must destroy it.

11. And in the proportion that beneficence is put to flight, is gratitude put to flight along with it. The proper object of this emotion is another's

good-will. But I do not hold as from the good-will of another, that which law hath enabled me to plea as my own right—nay to demand, with a front of hardy and resolute assertion. It is this which makes it the most delicate and dangerous of all ground—when law offers to prescribe rules for the exercise of beneficence, or to lay its compulsory hand on a virtue, the very freedom of which is indispensable to its existence. And it not only extinguishes the virtue; but it puts an end to all those responses of glad and grateful emotion, which its presence and its smile and the generosity of its free-will offerings awaken in society. It is laying an arrest on all the music of living intercourse, thus to forbid those beautiful and delicious echoes, which are reflected, on every visit of unconstrained mercy, from those families that are gladdened by her footsteps. And what is worse, it is substituting in their place, the hoarse and jarring discords of the challenge and the conflict and the angry litigation. We may thus see, that there is a province in human affairs, on which law should make no entrance—a certain department of human virtue wherein the moralities should be left to their own unfettered play, else they shall be frozen into utter apathy—a field sacred to liberty and good-will that should ever be kept beyond the reach of jurisprudence; or on which, if she once obtain a footing, she will spoil it of all those unbought and unbidden graces that natively adorn it. So that while to law we would commit the defence of society from all the aggressions of violence, and confide the strict and the

stern guardianship of the interests of justice—we should tremble for humanity lest it withered and expired under the grasp of so rough a protector; and lest before a countenance grave as that of a judge, and grim as that of a messenger-at-arms, this frail but loveliest of the virtues should be turned, as if by the head of Medusa, into stone.

12. But there are other moral ills in this unfortunate perversion, beside the extinction of good-will in the hearts of the affluent and of gratitude in the hearts of the poor—though it be no slight mischief to any community, that the tie of kindliness between these two orders should have been broken; and that the business of charity, which when left spontaneous is so fertile in all the amenities of life, should be transformed into a fierce warfare of rights, from its very nature incapable of adjustment, and, whether they be the encroached upon or the repelled, subjecting both parties to the sense of a perpetual violence. But over and above this, there are other distempers, wherewith it hath smitten the social economy of England, and of which experience will supply the English observer with many a vivid recollection. The reckless but withal most natural improvidence of those whom the state has undertaken to provide for, seeing that law hath proclaimed in their favour a discharge from the cares and the duties of self-preservation—the headlong dissipation, in consequence—the dissolution of family ties, for the same public and proclaimed charity which absolves a man from attention to himself will absolve him also

from attention to his relatives—the decay and interruption of sympathy in all the little vicinities of town and country, for each man under this system of an assured and universal provision feels himself absolved too from attention to his neighbours—These distempers both social and economic have a common origin; and the excess of them above what taketh place in a natural state of things, may all be traced to the unfortunate aberration, which, in this instance, the constitution of human law hath made from the constitution of human nature.

13. In our attempts to trace the rise of the possessory affection and of a sense of property, we have not been able to discover any foundation in nature, for a sentiment that we often hear impetuously urged by the advocates of the system of pauperism—that every man has a *right* to the means of subsistence. Nature does not connect this right with existence; but with continued occupation, and with another principle to which it also gives the sanction of its voice—that, each man is legitimate owner of the fruits of his own industry. These are the principles on which nature hath drawn her landmarks over every territory that is peopled and cultivated by human beings. And the actual distribution of property is the fruit, partly of man's own direct aim and acquisition, and partly of circumstances over which he had no control. The right of man to the means of existence on the sole ground that he exists has been loudly and vehemently asserted; yet is a factitious sentiment notwithstanding—tending to efface the distinctness of nature's landmarks, and to traverse those

arrangements, by which she hath provided far better for the peace and comfort of society, nay for the more sure and liberal support of all its members. It is true that nature, in fixing the principles on which man has a right to the fruits of the earth, to the materials of his subsistence, has left out certain individuals of the human family—some outcast stragglers, who, on neither of nature's principles, will be found possessed of any right, or of any property. It is for their sake that human law hath interposed, in some countries of the world; and, by creating or ordaining a right for them, has endeavoured to make good the deficiency of nature. But if justice alone could have ensured a right distribution for the supply of want, and if it must be through the medium of a right that the destitute shall obtain their maintenance—then, would there have been no need for another principle, which stands out most noticeably in our nature; and compassion would have been a superfluous part of the human constitution. It is by means of this additional principle that nature provides for the unprovided—not by unsettling the limits which her previous education had established in all minds —not by the extension of a right to every man; but by establishing in behalf of those some men, whom accident or the necessity of circumstances or even their own misconduct had left without a right, a compassionate interest in the bosom of their fellows. They have no advocate to plead for them at the bar of justice; and therefore nature hath furnished them with a gentler and more persuasive advocate, who might solicit for them at the

bar of mercy; and, for their express benefit, hath given to most men an ear for pity, to many a hand open as day for melting charity. But it is not to any rare, or romantic generosity, that she hath confided the relief of their wants. She hath made compassion one of the strongest, and, in spite of all the depravations to which humanity is exposed, one of the steadiest of our universal instincts. It were an intolerable spectacle even to the inmates of a felon's cell, did they behold one of their fellows in the agonies of hunger; and rather than endure it, would they share their own scanty meal with them.* It were still more intolerable to the householders of any neighbourhood—insomuch that, where law had not attempted to supersede nature, every instance of distress or destitution would, whether in town or country, give rise to an internal operation of charity throughout every little vicinity of the land. The mischief which law hath done, by trying to mend the better mechanism which nature had instituted, is itself a most impressive testimony to the wisdom of nature. The perfection of her arrangements, is never more strikingly exhi-

* The certainty of this operation is beautifully exemplified in a passage of Mr. Buxton's interesting book on prisons—from which it appears that there is no allowance of food to the debtors, and a very inferior allowance of food to the criminals, who are confined in the gaol at Bristol. The former live on their own means or the casual charity of the benevolent. Instances have occurred when both of these resources failed them—and starvation would have ensued, had not the criminals, rather than endure the neighbourhood of such a suffering, shared their own scanty pittance along with them—thus affording an *argumentum a fortiore* for a like strength of compassion throughout the land—seeing that it had survived the depraving process which leads to the malefactor's cell.

bited, than by those evils which the disturbance of them brings upon society—as when her law in the heart has been overborne by England's wretched law of pauperism; and this violation of the natural order has been followed up, in consequence, by a tenfold increase both of poverty and crime.

14. It is interesting to pursue the outgoings of such a system; and to ascertain whether nature hath vindicated her wisdom, by the evil consequences of a departure from her guidance on the part of man—for if so, it will supply another proof, or furnish us with another sight of the exquisite adaptation which she hath established between the moral and the physical, or between the two worlds of mind and matter. Certain, then, of the parishes of England have afforded a very near exemplification of the ultimate state to which one and all of them are tending—a state which is consummated, when the poor rates form so large a deduction from the rents of the land, that it shall at length cease to be an object to keep them in cultivation.* It is thus that some tracts of country are on the eve of being actually vacated by their proprietors; and as their place of superintendence cannot be vacated

* The following is an extract from the report of a select committee on the poor law printed in 1817. "The consequences which are likely to result from this state of things, are clearly set forth in the petition from the parish of Wombridge in Salop, which is fast approaching to this state. The petitioners state 'that the annual value of lands, mines and houses in this parish, is not sufficient to maintain the numerous and increasing poor, even if the same were set free of rent; and that these circumstances will inevitably compel the occupiers of lands and mines to relinquish them; and the poor will be without relief, or any known mode of obtaining it, unless some assistance be speedily afforded to them.'

by others, who have no right of superintendence—the result might be, that whole estates shall be as effectually lost to the wealth and resources of the country, as if buried by an earthquake under water, or, as if some blight of nature had gone over them and bereft them of their powers of vegetation. Now we know not, if the whole history of the world furnishes a more striking demonstration than this, of the mischief that may be done, by attempting to carry into practice a theoretical speculation, which, under the guise and even with the real purpose of benevolence, has for its plausible object, to equalize among the children of one common humanity, the blessings and the fruits of one common inheritance. The truth is that we have not been conducted to the present state of our rights and arrangements respecting property, by any artificial process of legislation at all. The state of property in which we find ourselves actually landed, is the result of a natural process, under which, all that a man earns by his industry is acknowledged to be his own—or, when the original mode of acquisition is lost sight of, all that a man retains by long and undisturbed possession is felt and acknowledged to be his own also. Legislation ought to do no more than barely recognise these principles, and defend its subjects against the violation of them. And when it attempts more than this—when it offers to

And your committee apprehend, from the petition before them, that this is one of many parishes that are fast approaching to a state of dereliction."

The inquiries of the present Poor law Commission have led to a still more aggravated and confirmed view of the evils of the system.

tamper with the great arrangements of nature, by placing the rights and the securities of property on a footing different from that of nature—when, as in the case of the English poor-laws, it does so, under the pretence and doubtless too with the honest design of establishing between the rich and the poor a nearer equality of enjoyment; we know not in what way violated nature could have inflicted on the enterprise a more signal and instructive chastisement, than when the whole territory of this plausible but presumptuous experiment is made to droop and to wither under it as if struck by a judgment from heaven—till at length that earth out of which the rich draw all their wealth and the poor all their subsistence, refuses to nourish the children who have abandoned her; and both parties are involved in the wreck of one common and overwhelming visitation.

15. But we read the same lesson in all the laws and movements of political economy. The superior wisdom of nature is demonstrated in the mischief which is done by any aberration therefrom—when her processes are disturbed or intermeddled with by the wisdom of man. The philosophy of free trade is grounded on the principle, that society is most enriched or best served, when commerce is left to its own spontaneous evolutions; and is neither fostered by the artificial encouragements, nor fettered by the artificial restraints of human policy. The greatest economic good is rendered to the community, by each man being left to consult and to labour for his own particular good—or, in other words, a more prosperous result is obtained by the spontaneous play and busy competition of

many thousand wills, each bent on the prosecution of its own selfishness, than by the anxious superintendence of a government, vainly attempting to medicate the fancied imperfections of nature, or to improve on the arrangements of her previous and better mechanism. It is when each man is left to seek, with concentrated and exclusive aim, his own individual benefit—it is then, that markets are best supplied; that commodities are furnished for general use, of best quality, and in greatest cheapness and abundance; that the comforts of life are most multiplied; and the most free and rapid augmentation takes place in the riches and resources of the commonwealth. Such a result, which at the same time not a single agent in this vast and complicated system of trade contemplates or cares for—each caring only for himself—strongly bespeaks a higher agent, by whose transcendental wisdom it is, that all is made to conspire so harmoniously and to terminate so beneficially. We are apt to recognise no higher wisdom than that of man, in those mighty concerts of human agency—a battle, or a revolution, or the accomplishment of some prosperous and pacific scheme of universal education; where each who shares in the undertaking is aware of its object, or acts in obedience to some master-mind who may have devised and who actuates the whole. But it is widely different, when, as in political economy, some great and beneficent end both unlooked and unlaboured for, is the result, not of any concert or general purpose among the thousands who are engaged in it—but is the compound effect, nevertheless, of each looking severally, and in the strenuous

pursuit of individual advantage, to some distinct object of his own. When we behold the working of a complex inanimate machine, and the usefulness of its products—we infer, from the unconsciousness of all its parts, that there must have been a planning and a presiding wisdom in the construction of it. The conclusion is not the less obvious, we think it emphatically more so, when, instead of this, we behold in one of the animate machines of human society, the busy world of trade, a beneficent result, an optimism of public and economical advantage, wrought out by the free movements of a vast multitude of men, not one of whom had the advantage of the public in all his thoughts. When good is effected by a combination of unconscious agents incapable of all aim, we ascribe the combination to an intellect that devised and gave it birth. When good is effected by a combination of conscious agents capable of aim, but that an aim wholly different with each from the compound and general result of their united operations—this bespeaks a higher will and a higher wisdom than any by which the individuals, taken separately, are actuated. When we look at each striving to better his own condition, we see nothing in this but the selfishness of man. When we look at the effect of this universal principle, in cheapening and multiplying to the uttermost all the articles of human enjoyment, and establishing a thousand reciprocities of mutual interest in the world—we see in this the benevolence and comprehensive wisdom of God.*

* See further upon this subject, Observations by Dr. Whately Archbishop of Dublin, in his recent volume on Political Economy.

16. When any given object is anxiously cared for by a legislature, and all its wisdom is put forth in devising measures for securing or extending it —it forms a pleasing discovery to find, that what may have hitherto been the laborious aim and effort of human policy, has already been provided for, with all perfection and entireness in the spontaneous workings of human nature; and that therefore, in this instance, the wisdom of the state has been anticipated by a higher wisdom—or the wisdom which presides over the ordinations of a human government, has been anticipated by the wisdom which ordained the laws of the human constitution. Of this there are manifold examples in political economy—as in the object of population, for the keeping up and increase of which, there was at one time a misplaced anxiety on the part of rulers; and the object of capital for the preservation and growth of which there is a like misplaced anxiety, and for the decay and disappearance of which there is an equally misplaced alarm. Both, in fact, are what may be termed self-regulating interests—or, in other words, interests which result with so much certainty from the checks and the principles that nature hath already instituted, as to supersede all public or patriotic regulation in regard to either of them. This has now been long understood on the subject of population; but it holds equally true on the subject of capital. There is, on the one hand, throughout society, enough of the appetite for enjoyment, to secure us against its needless excess; and, on the other, enough of the appetite for gain, to secure us against its hurtful

deficiency. And, by a law of oscillation as beautiful as that which obtains in the planetary system, and by which, amid all disturbances and errors, it is upheld in its mean state indestructible and inviolate—does capital, in like manner, constantly tend to a condition of optimism, and is never far from it, amid all the variations, whether of defect, or redundancy, to which it is exposed. When in defect, by the operation of high prices, it almost instantly recovers itself—when in excess, it, by the operation of low profits, or rather of losing speculations, almost instantly collapses into a right mediocrity. In the first case, the inducement is to trade rather than to spend; and there is a speedy accumulation of capital. In the second case, the inducement is to spend rather than to trade: and there is a speedy reduction of capital. It is thus that capital ever suits itself, in the way that is best possible, to the circumstances of the country—so as to leave uncalled for, any economic regulation by the wisdom of man; and that precisely because of a previous moral and mental regulation by the wisdom of God.

17. But if any thing can demonstrate the hand of a righteous Deity in the nature and workings of what may well be termed a mechanism, the very peculiar mechanism of trade; it is the healthful impulse given to all its movements, wherever there is a reigning principle of sobriety and virtue in the land—so as to ensure an inseparable connexion between the moral worth and the economic comfort of a people. Of this we should meet with innumerable verifications in political economy—did we make

a study of the science, with the express design of fixing and ascertaining them. There is one very beautiful instance in the effect, which the frugality and foresight of workmen would have, to control and equalize the fluctuations of commerce—acting with the power of a fly in mechanics; and so as to save, or at least indefinitely to shorten, those dreary intervals of suspended work or miserable wages, which now occur so often, and with almost periodic regularity in the trading world. What constitutes a sore aggravation to the wretchedness of such a season, is the necessity of overworking—so as, if possible, to compensate by the amount of labour for the deficiency of its remuneration; and yet the inverse effect of this in augmenting and perpetuating that glut, or overproduction, which is the real origin of this whole calamity. It would not happen in the hands of a people elevated and exempted above the urgencies of immediate want; and nothing will so elevate and exempt them, but their own accumulated wealth—the produce of a resolute economy and good management in prosperous times. Would they only save during high wages, what they might spend during low wages—so as when the depression comes, to slacken, instead of adding to their work, or even cease from it altogether—could they only afford to live, through the months of such a visitation, on their well-husbanded means, the commodities of the overladen market would soon clear away; when, with the return of a brisk demand on empty warehouses, a few weeks instead of months would restore them to importance and prosperity in the commonwealth.

This is but a single specimen from many others of that enlargement which awaits the labouring classes, after that by their own intelligence and virtue, they have won their way to it. With but wisdom and goodness among the common people, the whole of this economic machinery would work most beneficently for them—a moral ordination, containing in it most direct evidence for the wisdom and goodness of that Being by whose hands it is that the machinery has been framed and constituted; and who, the Preserver and Governor, as well as the Creator of His works, sits with presiding authority over all its evolutions.

18. But this is only one specimen out of the many—the particular instance of a quality that is universal, and which may be detected in almost all the phenomena and principles of the science; for throughout, political economy is but one grand exemplification of the alliance, which a God of righteousness hath established, between prudence and moral principle on the one hand, and physical comfort on the other. However obnoxious the modern doctrine of population, as expounded by Mr. Malthus, may have been, and still is, to weak and limited sentimentalists, it is the truth which of all others sheds the greatest brightness over the earthly prospects of humanity—and this in spite of the hideous, the yet sustained outcry which has risen against it. This is a pure case of adaptation, between the external nature of the world in which we live, and the moral nature of man, its chief occupier. There is a demonstrable inadequacy in all the material resources which the globe can

furnish, for the increasing wants of a recklessly increasing species. But over and against this, man is gifted with a moral and a mental power by which the inadequacy might be fully countervailed; and the species, in virtue of their restrained and regulated numbers, be upholden on the face of our world, in circumstances of large and stable sufficiency, even to the most distant ages. The first origin of this blissful consummation is in the virtue of the people; but carried into sure and lasting effect by the laws of political economy, through the indissoluble connexion which obtains between the wages and the supply of labour—so that in every given state of commerce and civilization, the amount of the produce of industry and of the produce of the soil, which shall fall to the share of the workmen, is virtually at the determination of the workmen themselves, who, by dint of resolute prudence and resolute principle together, may rise to an indefinitely higher status than they now occupy, of comfort and independence in the commonwealth. This opens up a cheering prospect to the lovers of our race; and not the less so, that it is seen through the medium of popular intelligence and virtue—the only medium through which it can ever be realized. And it sheds a revelation, not only on the hopeful destinies of man, but on the character of God—in having instituted this p pable alliance between the moral and the physical and so assorted the economy of outward natur o the economy of human principles and passion The lights of modern science have made us apprehend more clearly, by what steps the condition and the charac-

ter of the common people rise and fall with each other—insomuch, that, while on the one hand their general destitution is the inevitable result of their general worthlessness, they, on the other, by dint of wisdom and moral strength, can augment indefinitely, not the produce of the earth, nor the produce of human industry, but that proportion of both which falls to their own share. Their economic is sure to follow by successive advances in the career of their moral elevation; nor do we hold it impossible, or even unlikely—that gaining, every generation, on the distance which now separates them from the upper classes of society, they shall, in respect both of decent sufficiency and dignified leisure, make perpetual approximations to the fellowships and the enjoyments of cultivated life.

CHAPTER V.

Adaptations of the Material World to the Moral and Intellectual Constitution of Man.

1. If by External Nature be meant all that is external to mind, then the proper subject of the argument, in this Fourth Book, should be the adaptation of the Material to the Mental World. But if by External Nature be meant all that is external to one individual mind, then is the subject very greatly extended; for, beside the reciprocal influence between that individual mind and all sensible and material things, we should consider the

reciprocal influence between it and all other minds. By this contraction of the idea from the mental world to but one individual member of it; and this proportional extension in the idea of external nature from the material creation to the whole of that living, as well as inanimate creation, by which any single man is surrounded—we are introduced not merely to the action and re-action which obtain between mind and matter; but, which is far more prolific of evidence for a Deity, to the action and re-action which obtain between mind and mind. It is thus that we have proceeded hitherto in the argument of this work, and have consequently found access to a much larger territory which should otherwise have been left unexplored—and so have had the opportunity of tracing the marks of a divine intelligence in the mechanism of human society, and in the framework of the social and economical systems to which men are conducted, when they adhere to that light, and follow the impulse of those affections which God has bestowed on them.

2. But over and above these adaptations of the external mental world, we have also adaptations of the external material world to the Moral and Intellectual Constitution of Man; and these will chiefly engross our attention in the present chapter —though, if only to repair an omission on the subject of the relative sympathies between man and man, we might previously advert to that law of affection by which its intensity or strength is proportioned to the helplessness of its object. It takes a direction downwards; descending, for

example, with much greater force from parents to children, than ascending from children to parents back again—save when they lapse again into second infancy, and the duteous devoted attendance by the helpful daughters of a family, throughout the protracted ailments and infirmity of their declining years, instead of an exception, is in truth a confirmation of the law—as much so, as the stronger attraction of a mother's heart towards the youngest of the family; or, more impressive still, her more special and concentrated regard towards her sickly or decrepit or even idiot boy. It is impossible not to recognise in this beautiful determination of nature, the benevolence of nature's God.

3. We hasten to instances of another kind, which we all the more gladly seize upon, as being cases of purest and strictest adaptation, not of the external mental, but of the external material world, to the Moral Constitution of Man.

4. The power of speech is precisely such an adaptation. Whether we regard the organs of utterance and hearing in man, or the aerial medium by which sounds are conveyed—do we behold a pure subserviency of the material to the mental system of our world. It is true that the great object subserved by it, is the action and reaction between mind and mind—nor can we estimate this object too highly, when we think of the mighty influence of language, both on the moral and intellectual condition of our species. Still it is by means of an elaborate material construction that this pathway has been formed, from one heart and

from one understanding to another. And therefore it is, that the faculty of communication by words, with all the power and flexibility which belong to it, by which the countless benefits of human intercourse are secured, and all the stores of sentiment and thought are turned into a common property for the good of mankind, may well be ranked among the highest of the examples that we are now in quest of—it being indeed as illustrious an adaptation as can be named of External and Material Nature to the Moral and Intellectual Constitution of Man. Of the converse of disembodied spirits we know nothing. But to man cased in materialism, certain material passages or ducts of conveyance, for the interchange of thought and feeling between one mind and another seem indispensable. The exquisite provision which has been made for these, both in the powers of articulation and hearing, as also in that intermediate element, by the pulsations of which, ideas are borne forward, as on so many winged messengers from one intellect to another—bespeaks, and perhaps more impressively than any other phenomena in nature, the contrivance of a supreme artificer, the device and finger of a Deity.*

5. But articulate and arbitrary sound is not

* It will at once be seen that the same observations may be extended to written language, and to the fitness of those materials which subserve through its means, the wide and rapid communication of human thoughts. We in truth could have multiplied indefinitely such instances of adaptation as we are now giving—but we judged it better to have confined ourselves to matters of a more rudimental and general character—leaving the manifold detail and fuller developments of the argument to future labourers in the field.

the only vehicle, either of meaning or sentiment. There is a natural as well as artificial language, consisting chiefly of expressive tones—though greatly reinforced both by expressive looks and expressive gestures. The voice, by its intonations alone, is a powerful instrument for the propagation of sympathy between man and man; and there is similarity enough between us and the inferior animals, in the natural signs of various of the emotions, as anger and fear and grief and cheerfulness, for the sympathy being extended beyond the limits of our own species, and over a great part of the sentient creation. We learn by experience and association the significancy of the merely vocal apart from vocables; for almost each shade of meaning, at least each distinct sensibility, has its own appropriate intonation—so that, without catching one syllable of the utterance, we can, from its melody alone, often tell what are the workings of the heart, and even what are the workings of the intellect. It is thus that music, even though altogether apart from words, is so powerfully fitted, both to represent and to awaken the mental processes—insomuch that, without the aid of spoken characters, many a story of deepest interest is most impressively told, many a noble or tender sentiment is most emphatically conveyed by it. It says much for the native and original predominance of virtue—it may be deemed another assertion of its designed pre-eminence in the world, that our best and highest music is that which is charged with loftiest principle, whether it breathes in orisons of sacredness, or is employed to kindle the

purposes and to animate the struggles of resolved patriotism; and that never does it fall with more exquisite cadence on the ear of the delighted listener, than when attuned to the home sympathies of nature, it tells in accents of love or pity, of its woes and its wishes for all humanity. The power and expressiveness of music may well be regarded as a most beauteous adaptation of External and Material Nature to the Moral Constitution of Man—for what can be more adapted to his moral constitution, than that which is so helpful as music eminently is, to his moral culture? Its sweetest sounds are those of kind affection. Its sublimest sounds are those most expressive of moral heroism; or most fitted to solemnize the devotions of the heart, and prompt the aspirations and resolves of exalted piety.

6. A philosophy of taste has been founded on this contemplation; and some have contended that both the beauty and the sublimity of sounds are derived from their association with moral qualities alone. Without affirming that association is the only, or the universal cause, it must at least be admitted to have a very extensive influence over this class of our emotions. If each of the mental affections have its own appropriate intonation; and there be the same or similar intonations given forth, either by the inanimate creation or by the creatures having life which are inferior to man—then, frequent and familiar on every side of him, must be many of those sounds by which human passions are suggested, and the memory of things

awakened which are fitted to affect and interest the heart. And thus it is, that, to the ear of a poet, all nature is vocal with sentiment; and he can fancy a genius or residing spirit, in the ocean, or in the tempest, or in the rushing waterfall, or in the stream whose softer murmurs would lull him to repose—or in the mighty forest, when he hears the general sigh emitted by its innumerable leaves as they rustle in the wind, and from whose fitful changes he seems to catch the import of some deep and mysterious soliloquy. But the imagination will be still more readily excited by the notes and the cries of animals, as when the peopled grove awakens to harmony; or when it is figured, that, amid the amplitudes of savage and solitary nature, the lioness robbed of her whelps, calls forth the echoes of the wilderness—making it to ring with the proclamation of her wrongs. But, without conceiving any such rare or extreme sensibility as this, there is a common, an every-day enjoyment which all have in the sounds of nature; and, as far as sympathy with human emotions is awakened by them, and this forms an ingredient of the pleasure, it affords another fine example, of an adaptation in the external world to the mental constitution of its occupiers.

7. But the same philosophy has been extended to sights as well as sounds. The interchange of mind with mind is not restricted to language. There is an interchange by looks also; and the ever-varying hues of the mind are represented, not by the complexion of the face alone or the com-

position of its features, but by the attitude and gestures of the body.* It is thus that human sentiment or passion may come to be expressed by the colour and form and even the motion of visible things; by a kindred physiognomy for all the like emotions on the part of the inferior animals—nay, by a certain countenance or shape in the objects of mute and unconscious nature. It is thus that a moral investment sits on the aspects of the purely material world; and we accordingly speak of the modesty of the violet, the innocence of the lily, the commanding mountain, the smiling landscape. Each material object has its character, as is amply set forth in the beautiful illustrations of Mr. Alison; and so to the poet's eye, the whole panorama of nature is one grand personification, lighted up throughout by consciousness and feeling. This is the reason why in all languages, material images and moral characteristics are so blended and identified. It is the law of association which thus connects the two worlds of sense and of sentiment. Sublimity in the one is the counterpart to moral greatness in the other; and beauty in the one is the counterpart to moral delicacy in the other. Both the graceful and the grand of human character are as effectually embodied in the objects and

* We may here state that as the air is the medium by which sounds are conveyed—so light may be regarded as standing in the same relation to those natural signs whether of colour gesture or attitude which are addressed to the eye. Much could be said respecting the adaptation of light to the moral constitution of man—arising from the power which the very observation of our fellow-men has in repressing, so long as we are under it, indecency or crime. The works of iniquity are called works of darkness.

scenery of nature, as in those immortal forms which have been transmitted by the hand of sculptors to the admiration of distant ages. It is a noble testimony to the righteousness of God, that the moral and the external loveliness are thus harmonized—as well as to the wisdom which has so adapted the moral and the material system to each other, that supreme virtue and supreme beauty are at one.

> "Mind, mind alone, bear witness earth and heaven!
> The living fountain, in itself contains
> Of beauteous and sublime.
> There hand in hand sit paramount the graces;
> There enthroned, celestial Venus with divinest airs
> Invites the soul to never fading joy."
>
> AKENSIDE.

8. And we may here remark a certain neglect of external things and external influences, which, however enlightened or transcendentally rational it may seem, is at variance with truth of principle and sound philosophy. We would instance the undervaluing of the natural signs in eloquence, although their effect makes all the difference in point of impression and power between spoken and written language—seeing that, superadded to articulate utterance, the eye and the intonations and the gestures also serve as so many signals of conveyance for the transmission of sentiment from one mind to another. It is thus that indifference to manner or even to dress, may be as grievous a dereliction against the real philosophy of social intercourse—as indifference to the attitude and the drapery of figures would be against the philosophy

of the fine arts. Both proceed on the forgetfulness of that adaptation, in virtue of which materialism is throughout instinct with principle, and both in its colouring and forms, gives forth the most significant expressions of it. On this ground too we would affirm, both of state ceremonial and professional costume, that neither of them is insignificant; and that he who in the spirit of rash and restless innovation would upset them, as if they were the relics of a gross and barbaric age, may be doing violence not only to the usages of venerable antiquity, but to the still older and more venerable constitution of human nature—weakening in truth the bonds of social union, by dispensing with certain of those influences which the great author of our constitution designed for the consolidation and good order of society. This is not accordant with the philosophy of Butler, who wrote on the "use of externals in matters of religion," nor with the philosophy of those who prefer the findings of experience, however irreducible to system they may be, to all the subtleties or simplifications of unsupported theory.*

9. Before quitting this subject, we remark, that it is no proof against the theory which makes taste a derivative from morality, that our emotions of taste may be vivid and powerful, while our principles of morality are so weak as to have no ascendant or governing influence over the conduct.

* The perusal of those works which treat scientifically of the fine arts, as Sir Joshua Reynold's Discourses, is well adapted to rebuke and rectify the light estimation, in which all sensible accompaniments are apt to be held by us.

This is no unusual phenomenon of our mysterious nature. There is a general homage rendered to virtue in the world; but it is the homage, more of a dilettanti than of an obedient and practical devotee. This is not more surprising, than that the man of profligate habits should have a tasteful admiration of sacred pictures and sacred melodies; or that, with the heart of a coward, he should nevertheless catch the glow of at least a momentary inspiration from the music of war and patriotism. It seems the effect and evidence of some great moral derangement, that there should be such an incongruity in subjective man between his taste and his principles; and the evidence is not lessened but confirmed, when we observe a like incongruity in the objective nature by which he is surrounded—we mean, between the external mental and the external material world. We have only to open our eyes and see how wide, in point of loveliness, the contrast or dissimilarity is, between the moral and the material of our actual contemplation—the one coming immediately from the hand of God; the other tainted and transformed by the spirit of man. We believe with Alison and others, that, to at least a very great extent, much of the beauty of visible things lies in association; that it is this which gives its reigning expression to every tree and lake and waterfall, and which may be said to have impregnated with character the whole of the surrounding landscape. How comes it then, that, in the midst of living society, where we might expect to meet with the originals of all this fascination, we find scarcely any other thing than

a tame and uninteresting level of the flat and the sordid and the ordinary—whereas, in that inanimate scenery, which yields but the faint and secondary reflection of moral qualities, there is, on every line and on every feature, so vivid an impress of loveliness and glory? One cannot go forth of the crowded city to the fresh and the fair of rural nature, without the experience, that, while in the moral scene, there is so much to thwart and to revolt and to irritate—in the natural scene, all is gracefulness and harmony. It reminds us of the contrast which is sometimes exhibited, between the soft and flowery lawn of a cultivated domain, and the dark or angry spirit of its owner—of whom we might almost imagine, that he scowls from the battlements of his castle, on the intrusion of every unlicensed visitor. And again the question may be put—whence is it that the moral picturesque in our world of sense, as it beams upon us from its woods and its eminences and its sweet recesses of crystal stream or of grassy sunshine, should yield a delight so unqualified—while the primary moral characteristics, of which these are but the imagery or the visible representation, should, in our world of human spirits, be so wholly obliterated, or at least so wofully deformed? Does it not look as if a blight had come over the face of our terrestrial creation, which hath left its materialism in a great measure untouched, while it hath inflicted on man a sore and withering leprosy? Do not the very openness and benignity which sit on the aspect of nature reproach him, for the cold and narrow and creeping jealousies that be at work in his own selfish and sus-

picious bosom; and most impressively tell the difference between what man is, and what he ought to be?

10. There are certain other adaptations; but on which we forbear to expatiate. The relation between food and hunger, between the object and the appetite, is an instance of the adaptation between external nature and man's physical constitution—yet the periodical recurrence of the appetite itself, with its imperious demand to be satisfied, viewed as an impellent to labour even the most irksome and severe, has an important effect both on the moral constitution of the individual and on the state of society. The superficies of the human body, in having been made so exquisitely alive at every pore to the sensations of pain, may be regarded as nature's defensive covering against those exposures from without, which else might injure or destroy it. This is purely a physical adaptation, but it involves a moral adaptation also; for this shrinking and sensitive avoidance, at the first approaches of pain, affords a similar protection against certain hazards from within—as self-mutilation in the moment of the spirit's wantonness, or even self-destruction in the moment of its despair.

11. But we now proceed to specify the chief instances of this adaptation of External Nature to the Intellectual Constitution of Man.

12. (1.) The law of most extensive influence over the phenomena and processes of the mind, is the law of association, or, as denominated by Dr. Thomas Brown, the law of suggestion. If two

objects have been seen in conjunction, or in immediate succession, at any one time—then the sight or thought of one of them afterwards, is apt to suggest the thought of the other also; and the same is true of the objects of all the senses. The same smells or sounds or tastes which have occurred formerly, when they occur again, will often recall the objects from which they then proceeded, the occasions or other objects with which they were then associated. When one meets with a fragrance of a particular sort, it may often instantly suggest a fragrance of the same kind experienced months or years ago; the rose-bush from which it came; the garden where it grew; the friend with whom we then walked; his features, his conversation, his relatives, his history. When two ideas have been once in juxta-position, they are apt to present themselves in juxta-position over again—an aptitude which ever increases the oftener that the conjunction has taken place, till, as if by an invincible necessity, the antecedent thought is sure to bring its usual consequent along with it; and, not only single sequences, but lengthened trains or progressions of thought, may in this manner be explained.

13. And such are the great speed and facility of these successions, that many of the intermediate terms, though all of them undoubtedly present to the mind, flit so quickly and evanescently, as to pass unnoticed. This will the more certainly happen, if the antecedents are of no further use than to introduce the consequents; in which case, the consequents remain as the sole objects of attention, and the antecedents are forgotten. In the

act of reading, the ultimate object is to obtain possession of the author's sentiments or meaning; and all memory of the words, still more of the component letters, though each of them must have been present to the mind, pass irrecoverably away from it. In like manner, the anterior steps of many a mental process may actually be described, yet without consciousness—the attention resting, not on the fugitive means, but on the important end in which they terminate. It is thus that we seem to judge, on the instant, of distances, as if under a guidance that was immediate and instinctive, and not by the result of a derivative process—because insensible to the rapid train of inference which led to it. The mind is too much occupied with the information itself, for looking back on the light and shadowy footsteps of the messenger who brought it, which it would find difficult if not impossible to trace—and besides, having no practical call upon it for making such a retrospect. It is thus that, when looking intensely on some beautiful object in Nature, we are so much occupied with the resulting enjoyment, as to overlook the intermediate train of unbidden associations, which connects the sight of that which is before us, with the resulting and exquisite pleasure, that we feel in the act of beholding it. The principle has been much resorted to, in expounding that process, by which the education of the senses is carried forward; and, more especially, the way in which the intimations of sight and touch are made to correct and to modify each other. It has also been employed with good effect, in the attempt to establish a philosophy of taste. But these

rapid and fugitive associations, while they form a real, form also an unseen process; and we are not therefore to wonder, if, along with many solid explanations, they should have been so applied in the investigation of mental phenomena, as occasionally to have given rise to subtle and fantastic theories.

14. But our proper business at present is with results, rather than with processes; and instead of entering on the more recondite inquiries of the science, however interesting and however beautiful or even satisfactory the conclusions may be to which they lead—it is our task to point out those palpable benefits and subserviences of our intellectual constitution, which demonstrate, without obscurity, the benevolent designs of Him who framed us. There are some of our mental philosophers, indeed, who have theorised and simplified beyond the evidence of those facts which lie before us; and our argument should be kept clear, for in reality it does not partake, in the uncertainty or error of their speculations. The law of association, for example, has been of late reasoned upon, as if it were the sole parent and predecessor of all the mental phenomena. Yet it does not explain, however largely it may influence, the phenomena of memory. When by means of one idea, anyhow awakened in the mind, the whole of some past transaction or scene is brought to recollection, it is association which recalls to our thoughts this portion of our former history. But association cannot explain our recognition of its actual and historical truth—or what it is, which, beside an act

of conception, makes it also an act of remembrance. By means of this law we may understand how it is, that certain ideas, suggested by certain others which came before it, are now present to the mind. But superadded to the mere presence of these ideas, there is such a perception of the reality of their archetypes, as distinguishes a case of remembrance from a case of imagination—insomuch that over and above the conception of certain objects, there is also a conviction of their substantive being at the time which we connect with the thought of them; and this is what the law of association cannot by itself account for. It cannot account for our reliance upon memory—not as a conjurer of visions into the chamber of imagery, but as an informer of stable and objective truths which had place and fulfilment in the actual world of experience.

15. And the same is true of our believing anticipations of the future, which we have now affirmed to be true of our believing retrospects of the past. The confidence wherewith we count on the same sequences in future, that we have observed in the course of our past experience, has been resolved by some philosophers, into the principle of association alone. Now when we have seen a certain antecedent followed up by a certain consequent, the law of association does of itself afford a sufficient reason, why the idea of that antecedent should be followed up by the idea of its consequent; but it contains within it no reason, why, on the actual occurrence again of the antecedent, we should believe that the consequent will occur also. That

the thought of the antecedent should suggest the thought of the consequent, is one mental phenomenon. That the knowledge of the antecedent having anew taken place, should induce the certainty, that the consequent must have taken place also, is another mental phenomenon. We cannot confound these two, without being involved in the idealism of Hume or Berkeley. Were the mere thought of the consequent all that was to be accounted for, we need not go farther than to the law of association. But when to the existence of this thought, there is superadded a belief in the reality of its archetype, a distinct mental phenomenon comes into view, which the law of association does not explain; and which, for aught that the analysts of the mind have yet been able to trace or to discover, is an ultimate principle of the human understanding. This belief, then, is one thing. But ere we can make out an adaptation, we must be able to allege at least two things. And they are ready to our hands—for, in addition to the belief in the subjective mind, there is a correspondent and counterpart reality in objective nature. If we have formerly observed that a given antecedent is followed by a certain consequent, then, not only does the idea of the antecedent suggest the idea of the consequent; but there is a belief, that, on the actual occurrence of the same antecedent, the same consequent will follow over again. And the consequent does follow; or, in other words, this our instinctive faith meets with its unexpected fulfilment, in the actual course and constancy of nature. The law of association does of itself, and without going further,

secure this general convenience—that the courses of the mind are thereby conformed, or are made to quadrate and harmonize with the courses of the outer world. It is the best possible construction for the best and most useful guidance of the mind, as in the exercise of memory for example, that thought should be made to follow thought, according to the order in which the objects and events of nature are related to each other. But a belief in the certainty and uniformity of this order, with the counterpart verification of this belief in the actual history of things, is that which we now are especially regarding. It forms our first instance, perhaps the most striking and marvellous of all, of the adaptation of external nature to the intellectual constitution of man.

16. This disposition to count on the uniformity of Nature, or even to anticipate the same consequents from the same antecedents—is not the fruit of experience, but anterior to it; or at least anterior to the very earliest of those of her lessons, which can be traced backward in the history of an infant mind. Indeed it has been well observed by Dr. Thomas Brown, that the future constancy of Nature, is a lesson, which no observation of its past constancy, or no experience could have taught us. Because we have observed A a thousand times to be followed in immediate succession by B, there is no greater logical connexion between this proposition and the proposition that A will always be followed by B; than there is between the propositions that we have seen A followed once by B, and therefore A will always be followed by B. At whatever stage

of the experience, the inference may be made, whether longer or shorter, whether oftener or seldomer repeated—the conversion of the past into the future seems to require a distinct and independent principle of belief; and it is a principle which, to all appearance, is as vigorous in childhood, as in the full maturity of the human understanding. The child who strikes the table with a spoon for the first time, and is regaled by the noise, will strike again, with as confident an expectation of the same result, as if the succession had been familiar to it for years. There is the expectation before the experience of Nature's constancy; and still the topic of our wonder and gratitude is, that this instinctive and universal faith in the heart, should be responded to by objective nature, in one wide and universal fulfilment.

17. The proper office of experience, in this matter, is very generally misapprehended; and this has mystified the real principle and philosophy of the subject. Her office is not to tell, or to reassure us of the constancy of Nature; but to tell, what the terms of her unalterable progressions actually are. The human mind from its first outset, and in virtue of a constitutional bias coeval with the earliest dawn of the understanding, is prepared, and that before experience has begun her lessons, to count on the constancy of nature's sequences. But at that time, it is profoundly ignorant of the sequences in themselves. It is the proper business of experience to give this information; but it may require many lessons before that her disciples be made to understand, what be

the distinct terms even of but one sequence. Nature presents us with her phenomena in complex assemblages; and it is often difficult, in the work of disentangling her trains from each other, to single out the proper and causal antecedent with its resulting consequent, from among the crowd of accessary or accidental circumstances by which they are surrounded. There is never any uncertainty, as to the invariableness of nature's successions. The only uncertainty is as to the steps of each succession; and the distinct achievement of experience, is to ascertain these steps. And many mistakes are committed in this course of education, from our disposition to confound the similarities with the samenesses of Nature. We never misgive in our general confidence, that the same antecedent will be followed by the same consequent; but we often mistake the semblance for the reality, and are as often disappointed in the expectations that we form. This is the real account of that growing confidence, wherewith we anticipate the same results in the same apparent circumstances, the oftener that that result has in these circumstances been observed by us—as of a high-water about twice every day, or of a sun-rise every morning. It is not that we need to be more assured than we are already of the constancy of Nature, in the sense that every result must always be the sure effect of its strict and causal antecedent. But we need to be assured of the real presence of this antecedent, in that mass of contemporaneous things under which the result has taken place hitherto; and of this we are more and more satisfied, with

every new occurrence of the same event in the same apparent circumstances. This too is our real object in the repetition of experiments. Not that we suspect that Nature will ever vacillate from her constancy—for if by one decisive experiment we should fix the real terms of any succession, this experiment were to us as good as a thousand. But each succession in nature is so liable to be obscured and complicated by other influences, that we must be quite sure, ere we can proclaim our discovery of some new sequence, that we have properly disentangled her separate trains from each other. For this purpose, we have often to question Nature in many different ways; we have to combine and apply her elements variously; we have sometimes to detach one ingredient, or to add another, or to alter the proportions of a third—and all in order, not to ascertain the invariableness of Nature, for of this we have had instinctive certainty from the beginning; but, in order to ascertain what the actual footsteps of her progressions are, so as to connect each effect in the history of Nature's changes with its strict and proper cause. Meanwhile, amid all the suspense and the frequent disappointments which attend this search into the processes of nature, our confidence in the rigid and inviolable uniformity of these processes remains unshaken—a confidence not learned from experience, but amply confirmed and accorded to by experience. For this instinctive expectation is never once refuted, in the whole course of our subsequent researches. Nature though stretched on a rack, or put to the torture by the inquisitors

of science, never falters from her immutability; but persists, unseduced and unwearied, in the same response to the same question; or gives forth, by a spark, or an explosion, or an effervescence, or some other definite phenomenon, the same result to the same circumstances or combination of data. The anticipations of infancy meet with their glorious verification, in all the findings of manhood; and a truth which would seem to require Omniscience for its grasp, as coextensive with all Nature and all History, is deposited by the hand of God, in the little cell of a nursling's cogitations.

18. Yet the immutability of Nature has ministered to the atheism of some spirits, as impressing on the universe a character of blind necessity, instead of that spontaneity, which might mark the intervention of a willing and a living God. To refute this notion of an unintelligent fate, as being the alone presiding Divinity, the common appeal is to the infinity and exquisite skill of nature's adaptations. But to attack this infidelity in its fortress, and dislodge it thence, the more appropriate argument would be the very, the individual adaptation on which we have now insisted—the immutability of Nature, in conjunction with the universal sense and expectation, even from earliest childhood, that all men have of it; being itself one of the most marvellous and strikingly beneficial of these adaptations. When viewed aright, it leads to a wiser and sounder conclusion than that of the fatalists. In the instinctive, the universal faith of Nature's constancy, we behold a promise. In the actual

constancy of Nature, we behold its fulfilment. When the two are viewed in connexion, then, to be told that Nature never recedes from her constancy, is to be told that the God of Nature never recedes from his faithfulness. If not by a whisper from His voice, at least by the impress of His hand, He hath deposited a silent expectation in every heart; and he makes all Nature and all History conspire to realize it. He hath not only enabled man to retain in his memory a faithful transcript of the past; but by means of this constitutional tendency, this instinct of the understanding as it has been termed, to look with prophetic eye upon the future. It is the link by which we connect experience with anticipation—a power or exercise of the mind coeval with the first dawnings of consciousness or observation, because obviously that to which we owe the confidence so early acquired and so firmly established, in the information of our senses.* This disposition to

* It is from our tactual sensations that we obtain our first original perceptions of distance and magnitude; and it is only because of the invariable connexion which subsists between the same tactual and the same visual sensations, that by means of the latter we obtain secondary or acquired perceptions of distance and magnitude. It is obvious that without a faith in the uniformity of nature, this rudimental education could not have taken effect; and from the confidence wherewith we proceed in very early childhood on the intimations of the eye, we may infer how strongly this principle must have been at work throughout the anterior stage of our still earlier infancy. The lucid and satisfactory demonstration upon this subject in that delightful little work, the Theory of Vision, by Bishop Berkeley, has not been superseded, because it has not been improved upon, by the lucubrations of any subsequent author. The theology which he would found on the beautiful process which he has unfolded so well, is somewhat tinged with the mysticism of that doctrine which represents our seeing all things in God. Certain it is, however, that the process

presume on the constancy of nature, commences with the faculty of thought, and keeps by it through life, and enables the mind to convert its stores of memory into the treasures of science and wisdom; and so to elicit from the recollections of the past,

could not have been advanced or consummated, without an aboriginal faith on the part of the infant mind in the uniformity of nature's sequences, a disposition to expect the same consequents from the same antecedents—and hence, an inference which, whenever these same antecedents present themselves, is at length made, and that in very early childhood, with such rapidity as well as confidence, that it leads all men to confound their acquired with their original perceptions; and it requires a subtle analysis to disentangle the two from each other. Without partaking in the metaphysics of Berkeley, we fully concur in the strength and certainty of those theistical conclusions which are expressed by him in the following sentences—"Something there is of divine and admirable in this language addressed to our eyes, that may well awaken the mind, and deserve its utmost attention; it is learned with so little pains, it expresses the difference of things so clearly and aptly, it instructs with such facility and despatch, by one glance of the eye conveying a greater variety of advices, and a more distinct knowledge of things, than could be got by a discourse of several hours: and, while it informs, it amuses and entertains the mind with such singular pleasure and delight; it is of such excellent use in giving a stability and permanency to human discourse, in recording sounds and bestowing life on dead languages, enabling us to converse with men of remote ages and countries; and it answers so opposite to the uses and necessities of mankind, informing us more distinctly of those objects, whose nearness or magnitude qualify them to be of greatest detriment or benefit to our bodies, and less exactly in proportion as their littleness or distance make them of less concern to us. But these things are not strange, they are familiar, and that makes them to be overlooked. Things which rarely happen strike; whereas frequency lessens the admiration of things, though in themselves ever so admirable. Hence a common man who is not used to think and make reflections, would probably be more convinced of the being of a God by one single sentence heard once in his life from the sky, than by all the experience he has had of this visual language, contrived with such exquisite skill, so constantly addressed to his eyes, and so plainly declaring the nearness, wisdom, and providence of Him with whom we have to do." Minute Philosopher. Dialogue IV. Art. XV.

both the doctrines of a general philosophy, and the lessons of daily and familiar conduct—and that, by means of prognostics, not one of which can fail, for, in respect of her steadfast uniformity, Nature never disappoints, or, which is equivalent to this, the Author of Nature never deceives us. The generality of Nature's laws is indispensable, both to the formation of any system of truth for the understanding, and to the guidance of our actions. But ere we can make such use of it, the sense and the confident expectation of this generality must be previously in our minds; and the concurrence, the contingent harmony of these two elements; the exquisite adaptation of the objective to the subjective, with the manifest utilities to which it is subservient; the palpable and perfect meetness which subsists, between this intellectual propensity in man, and all the processes of the outward universe—while they afford incontestable evidence to the existence and unity of that design, which must have adjusted the mental and the material formations to each other, speak most decisively in our estimation both for the truth and the wisdom of God.

19. We have long felt this close and unexcepted, while at the same time, contingent harmony, between the actual constancy of Nature and man's faith in that constancy, to be an effectual preservative against that scepticism, which would represent the whole system of our thoughts and perceptions to be founded on an illusion. Certain it is, that beside an indefinite number of truths received by the understanding as the conclusions

of a proof more or less lengthened, there are truths recognised without proof by an instant act of intuition—not the results of a reasoning process, but themselves the first principles of all reasoning. At every step in the train of argumentation, we affirm one thing to be true, because of its logical connexion with another thing known to be true; but as this process of derivation is not eternal, it is obvious, that, at the commencement of at least some of these trains, there must be truths, which, instead of borrowing their evidence from others, announce themselves immediately to the mind in an original and independent evidence of their own. Now they are these primary convictions of the understanding, these cases of a belief without reason, which minister to the philosophical infidelity of those, who, professing to have no dependence on an instinctive faith, do in fact alike discard all truth, whether demonstrated or undemonstrated—seeing that underived or unreasoned truth must necessarily form the basis, as well as the continuous cement of all reasoning. They challenge us to account for these native and original convictions of the mind; and affirm that they may be as much due to an arbitrary organization of the percipient faculty, as to the objective trueness of the things which are perceived. And we cannot dispute the possibility of this. We can neither establish by reasoning those truths, whose situation is, not any where in the stream, but at the fountain of ratiocination; nor can we deny that beings might have been so differently constituted, as that, with reverse intuitions

to our own, they might have recognised as truths what we instantly recoil from as falsehoods, or felt to be absurdities our first and foremost principles of truth. And when this suspicion is once admitted, so as to shake our confidence in the judgments of the intellect, it were but consistent that it should be extended to the departments both of morality and taste. Our impressions of what is virtuous or of what is fair, may be regarded as alike accidental, and arbitrary with our impressions of what is true—being referable to the structure of the mind, and not to any objective reality in the things which are contemplated. It is thus that the absolutely true, or good, or beautiful, may be conceived of, as having no stable or substantive being in nature; and the mind, adrift from all fixed principle, may thus lose itself in universal pyrrhonism.

20. Nature is fortunately too strong for this speculation; but still there is a comfort in being enabled to vindicate the confidence which she has inspired—as in those cases, where some original principle of hers admits of being clearly and decisively tested. And it is so of our faith in the constancy of nature, met and responded to, throughout all her dominions by nature's actual constancy —the one being the expectation, the other its rigid and invariable fulfilment. This perhaps is the most palpable instance which can be quoted, of a belief anterior to experience, yet of which experience affords a wide and unexcepted verification. It proves at least of one of our implanted instincts, that it is unerring; and that, over against a sub-

jective tendency in the mind, there is a great objective reality in circumambient nature to which it corresponds. This may well convince us, that we live, not in a world of imaginations—but in a world of realities. It is a noble example of the harmony which obtains, between the original make and constitution of the human spirit upon the one hand, and the constitution of external things upon the other; and nobly accredits the faithfulness of Him, who, as the Creator of both, ordained this happy and wondrous adaptation. The monstrous suspicion of the sceptics is, that we are in the hands of a God, who, by the insertion of falsities into the human system, sports himself with a laborious deception on the creatures whom He has made. The invariable order of nature, in conjunction with the apprehension of this invariableness existing in all hearts; the universal expectation with its universal fulfilment, is a triumphant refutation of this degrading mockery—evincing, that it is not a phantasmagoria in which we dwell, but a world peopled with realities. That we are never misled in our instinctive belief of nature's uniformity, demonstrates the perfect safety wherewith we may commit ourselves to the guidance of our original principles, whether intellectual or moral—assured, that, instead of occupying a land of shadows, a region of universal doubt and derision, they are the stabilities, both of an everlasting truth and an everlasting righteousness with which we have to do.

21. This lesson obtains a distinct and additional confirmation from every particular instance of

adaptation, which can be found, of external nature, either to the moral or intellectual constitution of man.

22. (2.) To understand our second adaptation we must advert to the difference that obtains between those truths which are so distinct and independent, that each can only be ascertained by a separate act of observation; and those truths which are either logically or mathematically involved in each other.* For example, there is no such dependence between the colour of a flower and its smell, as that the one can be reasoned from the other; and, in every different specimen therefore, we, to ascertain the two facts of the colour and the smell, must have recourse to two observations. On the other hand, there is such a dependence between

* See this distinction admirably expounded in Whately's Logic —a work of profound judgment, and which effectually vindicates the honours of a science, that since the days of Bacon, or rather (which is more recent) since the days of his extravagant because exclusive authority, it has been too much the fashion to depreciate. The author, if I might use the expression without irreverence, has given to Bacon the things which are Bacon's, and to Aristotle the things which are Aristotle's. He has strengthened the pretensions of logic by narrowing them—that is, instead of placing all the intellectual processes under its direction, by assigning to it as its proper subject the art of deduction alone. He has made most correct distinction between the inductive and the logical; and it is by attending to the respective provinces of each, that we come to perceive the incompetency of mere logic for the purpose of discovery strictly so called. The whole chapter on discovery is particularly valuable—leading us clearly to discriminate between that which logic can, and that which it cannot achieve. It is an instrument, not for the discovery of truth properly new, but for the discovery of truths which are enveloped or virtually contained in propositions already known. It instructs but does not inform; and has nought to do in syllogism with the truth of the premises, but only with the truth of the connexion between the premises and the conclusion.

the proposition that self-preservation is the strongest and most general law of our nature, and the proposition that no man will starve if able and in circumstances to work for his own maintenance—that the one proposition can be deduced by inference from the other, as the conclusion from the premises of an argument. And still more there is such a dependence between the proposition, that the planet moves in an elliptical orbit round the sun, having its focus in the centre of that luminary, and a thousand other propositions—so that without a separate observation for each of the latter, they can be reasoned from the former; just as an infinity of truths and properties can, without observation, be satisfactorily demonstrated of many a curve from the simple definition of it. We do not affirm, that, in any case, we can establish a dogma, or make a discovery independently of all observation —any more than in a syllogism we are independent of observation for the truth of the premises—both the major and the minor propositions being generally verified in this way; while the connexion between these and the conclusion, is all, in the syllogism, wherewith the art of logic has properly to do. In none of the sciences, is the logic of itself available for the purposes of discovery; and it can only contribute to this object, when furnished with sound data, the accuracy of which is determined by observation alone. This holds particularly true of the mixed mathematics, where the conclusions are sound, only in as far as the first premises are sound —which premises, in like manner, are not reasoned truths, but observed truths. Even in the pure

mathematics, some obscurely initial or rudimental process of observation may have been necessary, ere the mind could arrive at its first conceptions, either of quantity or number. Certain it is, however, that, in all the sciences, however dependent on observation for the original data, we can, by reasoning on the data, establish an indefinite number of distinct and important and useful propositions—which, if soundly made out, observation will afterwards verify; but which, anterior to the application of this test, the mind, by its own excogitations, may have made the objects of its most legitimate conviction. It is thus that, on the one hand, we, by the inferences of a sound logic, can, on an infinity of subjects, discover what should for ever have remained unknown, had it been left to the findings of direct observation; and that, on the other hand, though observation could not have made the discovery, it never fails to attest it. Visionaries, on the one hand, may spurn at the ignoble patience and drudgery of observers; and ignorant practitioners, whether in the walks of business or legislation, may, on the other, raise their senseless and indiscriminate outcry against the reasoners—but he who knows to distinguish between an hypothesis based on imagination, and a theory based on experience, and perceives how helpless either reason or observation is, when not assisted by the other, will know how to assign the parts, and to estimate the prerogatives of both.

23. When the mind has retired from direct converse with the external world, and brought to its own inner chamber of thought the materials

which it has collected there, it then delivers itself up to its own processes—first ascending analytically from observed phenomena to principles, and then descending synthetically from principles to yet unobserved phenomena. We cannot but recognise it as an exquisite adaptation between the subjective and the objective, between the mental and the material systems—that the results of the abstract intellectual process and the realities of external nature should so strikingly harmonize.* It is exemplified in all the sciences, in the economical, and the mental, and the physical, and most of all in the physico-mathematical—as when Newton, on

* There are some fine remarks by Sir John Herschel in his preliminary discourse on the study of Natural Philosophy on this adaptation of the abstract ideas to the concrete realities, of the discoveries made in the region of pure thought to the facts and phenomena of actual nature—as when the properties of conic sections, demonstrated by a laborious analysis, remained inapplicable till they came to be embodied in the real masses and movements of astronomy.

"These marvellous computations might almost seem to have been devised on purpose to show how closely the extremes of speculative refinement and practical utility can be brought to approximate." Herschel's Discourse, p. 28.

"They show how large a part pure reason has to perform in the examination of nature, and how implicit our reliance ought to be on that powerful and methodical system of rules and processes, which constitute the modern mathematical analysis, in all the more difficult applications of exact calculation to her phenomena." p. 33.

"Almost all the great combinations of modern mechanism and many of its refinements and nicer improvements, are creations of pure intellect, grounding its exertion upon a very moderate number of elementary propositions, in theoretical mechanics and geometry." p. 63.

The discovery of the principle of the achromatic telescope, is termed by Sir John "a memorable case in science, though not a singular one, where the speculative geometer in his chamber, apart from the world, and existing among abstractions, has originated views of the noblest practical application." p. 255.

the calculations and profound musings of his solitude, predicted the oblate spheroidal figure of the earth, and the prediction was confirmed by the mensurations of the academicians, both in the polar and equatorial regions; or as, when abandoning himself to the devices and the diagrams of his own construction, he thence scanned the cycles of the firmament, and elicited from the scroll of enigmatical characters which himself had framed, the secrets of a sublime astronomy, that high field so replete with wonders, yet surpassed by this greatest wonder of all, the intellectual mastery which man has over it. That such a feeble creature should have made this conquest—that a light struck out in the little cell of his own cogitations should have led to a disclosure so magnificent—that by a calculus of his own formation, as with the power of a talisman, the heavens, with their stupendous masses and untrodden distances, should have thus been opened to his gaze—can only be explained by the intervention of a Being having supremacy over all, and who has adjusted the laws of matter and the properties of mind to each other. It is only thus we can be made to understand, how man by the mere workings of his spirit, should have penetrated so far into the workmanship of Nature; or that, restricted though he be to a spot of earth, he should nevertheless tell of the suns and the systems that be afar—as if he had travelled with the line and plummet in his hand to the outskirts of creation, or carried the torch of discovery round the universe.

24. (3.) Our next adaptation is most notably exemplified in those cases, when some isolated phe-

nomenon, remote and having at first no conceivable relation to human affairs, is nevertheless converted by the plastic and productive intellect of man, into some application of mighty and important effect on the interests of the world. One example of this is the use that has been made of the occultations and emersions of Jupiter's satellites, in the computation of longitudes, and so the perfecting of navigation. When one contemplates a subserviency of this sort fetched to us from afar, it is difficult not to imagine of it as being the fruit of some special adjustment, that came within the purpose of him, who, in constructing the vast mechanism of Nature, overlooked not the humblest of its parts—but incorporated the good of our species, with the wider generalities and laws of a universal system.* The conclusion is rather en-

* The author of the Natural History of Enthusiasm, in his edition of Edward's treatise on the will, presents us with the following energetic sentences on this subject.

"Every branch of modern science abounds with instances of remote correspondences between the great system of the world, and the artificial (*the truly natural*) condition to which knowledge raises him. If these correspondences were single or rare they might be deemed merely fortuitous; like the drifting of a plank athwart the track of one who is swimming from a wreck. But when they meet us on all sides and invariably, we must be resolute in atheism not to confess that they are emanations from one and the same centre of wisdom and goodness. Is it nothing more than a lucky accommodation which makes the polarity of the needle to subserve the purposes of the mariner? or may it not safely be affirmed, both that the magnetic influence (whatever its primary intention may be) had reference to the business of navigation—a reference incalculably important to the spread and improvement of the human race; and that the discovery and the application of this influence arrived at the destined moment in the revolution of human affairs, when in combination with other events, it would produce the greatest effect? Nor should we scruple to affirm that the relation between the inclination of the earth's axis and the

hanced than otherwise by the seemingly incidental way in which the telescope was discovered. The observation of the polarity of the magnet is an example of the same kind—and with the same result, in multiplying, by an enlarged commerce the enjoyments of life, and speeding onward the science and civilization of the globe. There cannot a purer instance be given, of adaptation between external nature and the mind of man—than when some material, that would have remained for ever useless in the hands of the unintelligent and unthoughtful, is converted, by the fertility and power of the human understanding, into an instrument for the

conspicuous star which, without a near rival, attracts even the eye of the vulgar, and shows the north to the wanderer on the wilderness or on the ocean, is in like manner a beneficent arrangement. Those who would spurn the supposition that the celestial locality of a sun immeasurably remote from our system, should have reference to the accommodation of the inhabitants of a planet so inconsiderable as our own, forget the style of the Divine Works, which is, to serve some great or principal end, compatibly with ten thousand lesser and remote interests. Man if he would secure the greater, must neglect or sacrifice the less; not so the Omnipotent Contriver. It is a fact full of meaning, that those astronomical phenomena (and so others) which offer themselves as available for the purposes of art, as for instance of navigation, or geography, do not fully or effectively yield the end they promise, until after long and elaborate processes of calculation have disentangled them from variations, disturbing forces and apparent irregularities. To the rude fact, if so we might designate it, a mass of recondite science must be appended, before it can be brought to bear with precision upon the arts of life. Thus the polarity of the needle or the eclipses of Jupiter's moons are as nothing to the mariner, or the geographer, without the voluminous commentary furnished by the mathematics of astronomy. The fact of the expansive force of steam must employ the intelligence and energy of the mechanicians of an empire, during a century, before the whole of its beneficial powers can be put in activity. Chemical, medical, and botanical science is filled with parallel instances; and they all affirm, in an articulate manner, the two-fold purpose of the Creator—to benefit man and to educate him.

further extension of our knowledge or our means of gratification. The prolongation of their eyesight to the aged by means of convex lenses, made from a substance at once transparent and colourless—the force of steam with the manifold and ever-growing applications which are made of it—the discovery of platina, which, by its resistance to the fiercest heats, is so available in prosecuting the ulterior researches of chemistry*—even the very abundance and portability of those materials by which written characters can be multiplied, and, through the impulse thus given to the quick and copious circulation of human thoughts, mind acts with rapid diffusion upon mind though at the distance of a hemisphere from each other, conceptions and informations and reasonings these products of the intellect alone being made to travel over the world by the intervention of material substances—these, while but themselves only a few taken at random from the multitude of strictly appropriate specimens which could be alleged of an adaptation between the systems of mind and matter, are suf-

* "This among many such lessons will teach us that the most important uses of natural objects are not those which offer themselves to us most obviously. The chief use of the moon for man's immediate purposes remained unknown to him for five thousand years from his creation. And since it cannot but be that innumerable and most important uses remain to be discovered among the materials and objects already known to us, as well as among those which the progress of science must hereafter disclose, we may here conceive a well grounded expectation, not only of constant increase in the physical resources of mankind, and the consequent improvement of their condition, but of continual accessions to our power of penetrating into the arcana of nature, and becoming acquainted with her highest laws." Sir John Herschel's Discourse, p. 308, 309.

ficient to mark an obvious contrivance and forth-putting of skill in the adjustment of the systems to each other. Enough has been already done to prove of mind, with its various powers, that it is the fittest agent which could have been employed for working upon matter; and of matter, with its various properties and combinations, that it is the fittest instrument which could have been placed under the disposal of mind. Every new triumph achieved by the human intellect over external nature, whether in the way of discovery or of art, serves to make the proof more illustrious. In the indefinite progress of science and invention, the mastery of man over the elements which surround him is every year becoming more conspicuous—the pure result of adaptation, or of the way in which mind and matter have been conformed to each other; the first endowed by the Creator with those powers which qualify it to command; the second no less evidently endowed with those corresponding susceptibilities which cause it to obey.

25. (4.) To prepare for our next instance, there is one especial adaptation that we shall now bring forward, and all the more willingly that, beside being highly important in itself, it forms an instance of adaptation in the pure and limited sense of the term—even the influence of a circumstance strictly material on the state of the moral world in all the civilized, and indeed in all the appropriated countries on the face of the earth. We advert to the actual fertility of the land, and to the circumstances purely physical by which the degree or measure of that fertility is determined. It has been well stated

by some of the expounders of geological science, that, while the vegetable mould on the earth's surface is subject to perpetual waste, from the action both of the winds and of the waters, either blowing it away in dust, or washing it down in rivers to the ocean—the loss thus sustained, is nevertheless perpetually repaired by the operation of the same material agents on the uplands of the territory—whence the dust and the debris, produced by a disintegration that is constantly going on even in the hardest rocks, is either strewed by the atmosphere, or carried down in an enriching sediment by mountain streams to the lands which are beneath them. It has been rightly argued, as the evidence and example of a benevolent design, that the opposite causes of consumption and of supply are so adjusted to each other, as to have ensured the perpetuity of our soils.* But even though these counteracting

* "It is highly interesting to trace up, in this manner, the action of causes with which we are familiar, to the production of effects, which at first seem to require the introduction of unknown and extraordinary powers; and it is no less interesting to observe, how skilfully nature has balanced the action of all the minute causes of waste, and rendered them conducive to the general good. Of this we have a most remarkable instance, in the provision made for preserving the soil, or the coat of vegetable mould, spread out over the surface of the earth. This coat, as it consists of loose materials, is easily washed away by the rains, and is continually carried down by the rivers into the sea. This effect is visible to every one; the earth is removed not only in the form of sand and gravel, but its finer particles suspended in the waters, tinge those of some rivers continually, and those of all occasionally, that is, when they are flooded or swollen with rains. The quantity of earth thus carried down, varies according to circumstances; it has been computed in some instances, that the water of a river in a flood, contains earthy matter suspended in it, amounting to more than the two hundred and fiftieth part of its own bulk. The soil therefore, is continually diminished, its parts being delivered from higher to lower levels, and finally delivered into the sea. But it

forces had been somewhat differently balanced; though the wasting operation had remained as active and as powerful, while a more difficult pulverization of the rocks had made the restorative operation slower and feebler than before—still we might have had our permanent or stationary soils, but only all of less fertility than that in which we now find them. A somewhat different constitution of the rocks; or a somewhat altered proportion in the forces of that machinery which is brought to bear upon them—in the cohesion that withstands, or in the impulse and the atmospherical depositions and the grinding frosts and the undermining torrents that separate and carry off the materials—a slight change in one or all of these causes, might have let down each of the various soils on the face of the world to a lower point in the scale of productiveness than at present belongs to them. And when we think of the mighty bearing which the determination of this single element has on the state and interests of human society, we cannot resist the conclusion that, depending as it does on

is a fact, that the soil, notwithstanding, remains the same in quantity, or at least nearly the same, and must have done so, ever since the earth was the receptacle of animal or vegetable life. The soil therefore is augmented from other causes, just as much at an average, as it is diminished by those now mentioned; and this augmentation evidently can proceed from nothing but the constant and slow disentegration of the rocks. In the permanence, therefore, of a coat of vegetable mould on the surface of the earth, we have a demonstrative proof of the continual destruction of the rocks; and cannot but admire the skill, with which the powers of the many chemical and mechanical agents employed in this complicated work, are so adjusted, as to make the supply and the waste of the soil exactly equal to one another."—Playfair's Illustrations of the Huttonian Theory. Section III. Art. 13.

so many influences, there has, in the assortment of these, been a studied adaptation of the material and the mental worlds to each other. For only let us consider the effect, had the fertility been brought so low, as that on the best of soils, the produce extracted by the most strenuous efforts of human toil, could no more than repay the cultivation bestowed on them—or that the food, thus laboriously raised, would barely suffice for the maintenance of the labourers. It is obvious that a fertility beneath this point would have kept the whole earth in a state of perpetual barrenness and desolation—when, though performing as now its astronomical circuit in the heavens, it would have been a planet bereft of life, or at least unfit for the abode and sustenance of the rational generations by whom it is at present occupied. But even with a fertility at this point, although a race of men might have been upholden, the tenure by which each man held his existence behoved to have been a life of unremitting drudgery; and we should have beheld the whole species engaged in a constant struggle of penury and pain for the supply of their animal necessities. And it is because of a fertility above this point, the actual fertility of vast portions of land in most countries of the earth—that many and extensive are the soils which yield a large surplus produce, over and above the maintenance of all, who are engaged, whether directly or indirectly, in the work of their cultivation. The strength of the possessory feelings on the one hand, giving rise to possessory rights recognised and acquiesced in by all men; these rights invest-

ing a single individual with the ownership of lands, that yield on the other hand a surplus produce, over which he has the uncontrolled disposal—make up together, such a constitution of the moral, combined with such a constitution of the material system, as demonstrates that the gradation of wealth in human society has its deep and its lasting foundation in the nature of things.

26. (5.) The way is now prepared for our next adaptation, which hinges upon this—that the highest efforts of intellectual power, and to which few men are competent, the most difficult intellectual processes, requiring the utmost abstraction and leisure for their development, are often indispensable to discoveries, which, when once made, are found capable of those useful applications, the value of which is felt and recognised by all men. The most arduous mathematics had to be put into requisition, for the establishment of the lunar theory—without which our present lunar observations could have been of no use for the determination of the longitude. This dependence of the popular and the practical on an anterior profound science runs through much of the business of life, in the mechanics and chemistry of manufactures as well as in navigation; and indeed is more or less exemplified so widely, or rather universally, throughout the various departments of human industry and art, that it most essentially contributes to the ascendancy of mind over muscular force in society—besides securing for mental qualities, the willing and reverential homage of the multitude. This peculiar influence stands complicated with other

arrangements, requiring a multifarious combination, that speaks all the more emphatically for a presiding intellect, which must have devised and calculated the whole. We have already stated, by what peculiarity in the soil it was, that a certain number of the species was exempted from the necessity of labour; and without which, in fact, all science and civilization would have been impossible. We have also expounded in some degree the principle, which both originated the existing arrangements of property, and led men to acquiesce in them. But still it is a precarious acquiescence, and liable to be disturbed by many operating causes of distress and discontent in society. If there be influences on the side of the established order of things, there are also counteractive influences on the opposite side, of revolt and irritation against it; and by which, the natural reverence of men for rank and station may at length be overborne. In the progress of want and demoralization among the people; in the pressure of their increasing numbers, by which they at once outgrow the means of instruction, and bear more heavily on the resources of the land than before; in the felt straitness of their condition, and the proportionate vehemence of their aspirations after enlargement—nothing is easier than to give them a factitious sense of their wrongs, and to inspire them with the rankling imagination of a heartless and haughty indifference on the part of their lordly superiors towards them, whose very occupation of wealth, they may be taught to regard as a monopoly, the breaking down of which were an act of generous patriotism. Against these

brooding elements of revolution in the popular mind, the most effectual preservative certainly, were the virtue of the upper classes,—or that our great men should be good men. But a mighty help to this, and next to it in importance, were, that to the power which lies in wealth, they should superadd the power which lies in knowledge—or that the vulgar superiority of mere affluence and station, should be strengthened in a way that would command the willing homage of all spirits, that is, by the mental superiority which their opportunities of lengthened and laborious education enable them to acquire. By a wise ordination of Nature, the possessors of rank and fortune, simply as such, have a certain ascendant power over their fellows; and, by the same ordination, the possessors of learning have an ascendancy also—and it would mightily conduce to the strength and stability of the commonwealth, if these influences were conjoined; or, in other words, if the scale of wealth and the scale of intelligence, in as far as that was dependent on literary culture, could be made to harmonize. The constitution of science, or the adaptation which obtains between the objects of knowledge and the knowing faculties, is singularly favourable to the alliance for which we now plead—insomuch that, to sound the depths of philosophy, time and independence and exemption from the cares and labours of ordinary life seem indispensable; and, on the other hand, profound discoveries, or a profound acquaintance with them, are sure to command a ready deference even from the multitude, whether on account of the natural respect which all men feel for pre-eminent under-

standing, or on account of the palpable utilities to which, in a system of things so connected as ours, even the loftiest and most recondite science is found to be subservient. On the same principle that, in a ship, the skilful navigation of its captain, will secure for him the prompt obedience of the crew to all his directions;* or that, in an army, the consummate generalship of its commander will subor-

* "We have before us an anecdote communicated to us by a naval officer, (Captain Basil Hall,) distinguished for the extent and variety of his attainments, which shows how impressive such results may become in practice. He sailed from San Blas on the west coast of Mexico, and, after a voyage of 8000 miles, occupying eighty-nine days, arrived off Rio Janeiro, having in this interval passed through the Pacific Ocean, rounded Cape Horn, and crossed the South Atlantic, without making land, or even seeing a single sail, with the exception of an American whaler off Cape Horn. Arrived within a week's sail of Rio, he set seriously about determining, by lunar observations, the precise line of the ship's course, and its situation in it at a determinate moment, and having ascertained this within from five to ten miles, ran the rest of the way by those more ready and compendious methods, known to navigators, which can be safely employed for short trips between one known point and another, but which cannot be trusted in long voyages, where the moon is their only guide. The rest of the tale we are enabled by his kindness to state in his own words:—'We steered towards Rio Janeiro for some days after taking the lunars above described, and having arrived within fifteen or twenty miles of the coast, I hove-to till four in the morning, when the day should break, and then bore up; for although it was very hazy, we could see before us a couple of miles or so. About eight o'clock it became so foggy that I did not like to stand in farther, and was just bringing the ship to the wind again before sending the people to breakfast, when it suddenly cleared off, and I had the satisfaction of seeing the great sugar-loaf peak, which stands on one side of the harbour's mouth, so nearly right a-head that we had not to alter our course above a point, in order to hit the entrance of Rio. This was the first land we had seen for three months, after crossing so many seas, and being set backwards and forwards by innumerable currents and foul winds.' The effect on all on board might well be conceived to have been electric; and it is needless to remark how essentially the authority of a commanding

dinate all the movements of the immense host, to the power of one controlling and actuating will—so, in general society, did wealth, by means of a thorough scholarship on the part of the higher classes, but maintain an intimate fellowship with wisdom and sound philosophy—then, with the same conservative influence as in these other examples, would the intellectual ascendancy thus acquired, be found of mighty effect, to consolidate and maintain all the gradations of the commonwealth.

27. It is thus that a vain and frivolous aristocracy, averse to severe intellectual discipline, and beset with the narrow prejudices of an order, let themselves down from that high vantage-ground on which fortune hath placed them—where, by a right use of the capabilities belonging to the state in which they were born, they might have kept their firm footing to the latest generations. Did all truth lie at the surface of observation, and was it alike accessible to all men, they could not with such an adaptation of external nature to man's intellectual constitution, have realized the peculiar advantage on which we are now insisting. But it is because there is so much of important and applicable truth, which lies deep and hidden under the surface, and which can only be appropriated by men who combine unbounded leisure with the

officer over his crew may be strengthened by the occurrence of such incidents, indicative of a degree of knowledge and consequent power beyond their reach."—*Herschel's Discourse*, p. 28, 29.

It is an extreme instance of the connexion between mental power and civil or political ascendancy, though often verified in the history of the world—that military science has often led to the establishment of a military despotism.

habit or determination of strenuous mental effort—it is only because of such an adaptation, that they who are gifted with property are, as a class, gifted with the means, if they would use it, of a great intellectual superiority over the rest of the species. There is a strong natural veneration for wealth, and also a strong natural veneration for wisdom. It is by the union of the two that the horrors of revolutionary violence might for ever be averted from the land. Did our high-born children of affluence, for every ten among them, the mere loungers of effeminacy and fashion, or the mere lovers of sport and sensuality and splendour—did they, for every ten of such, furnish but one enamoured of higher gymnastics, the gymnastics of the mind; and who accomplished himself for the work and warfare of the senate, by his deep and comprehensive views in all the proper sciences of a statesman, the science of government, and politics, and commerce, and economics, and history, and human nature—by a few gigantic men among them, thus girded for the services of patriotism, a nation might be saved—because arrested on that headlong descent, which, at the impulse of the popular will, it might else have made, from one measure of fair but treacherous promise, from one ruinous plausibility to another. The thing most to be dreaded, is that hasty and superficial legislation into which a government may be hurried by the successive onsets of public impatience, and under the impulse of a popular and prevailing cry. Now the thing most needed, is a counteractive to this evil, is a thoroughly intellectual parliament,

where shall predominate that masculine sense which has been trained for act and application by masculine studies; and where the silly watchword of theory shall not be employed, as heretofore, to overbear the lessons of soundly generalized truth —because, instead of being discerned at a glance, they are fetched from the depths of philosophic observation, or shone upon by lights from afar, in the accumulated experience of ages. We have infinitely more to apprehend from the demagogues than from the doctrinaires of our present crisis; and it will require a far profounder attention to the principles of every question than many deem to be necessary, or than almost any are found to bestow, to save us from the crudities of a blindfold legislation.

28. And it augurs portentously for the coming destinies of our land, that, in the present rage for economy, such an indiscriminate havock should have been made—so that pensions and endowments for the reward or encouragement of science, should have had the same sentence of extinction passed upon them as the most worthless sinecures. The difficulties of our most sublime, and often too our most useful knowledge, make it inaccessible to all but to those who are exempt from the care of their own maintenance—so that unless a certain, though truly insignificant portion of the country's wealth, be expended in this way, all high and transcendental philosophy, however conducive as it often is to the strength as well as glory of a nation, must vanish from the land. When the original possessors of wealth neglect individually this application of it; and, whether from indolence or the love of pleasure,

fall short of that superiority in mental culture, of which the means have been put into their hands—we can only reproach their ignoble preference, and lament the ascendant force of sordid and merely animal propensities, over the principles of their better and higher nature. But when that which individuals do in slavish compliance with their indolence and passions, the state is also found to do in the exercise of its deliberate wisdom, and on the maxims of a settled policy—when, instead of ordaining any new destination of wealth in favour of science, it would divorce and break asunder the goodly alliance by a remorseless attack on the destinations of wiser and better days—such a gothic spoliation as this, not a deed of lawless cupidity, but the mandate of a senate-house, were a still more direct and glaring contravention to the wisdom of Nature, and to the laws of that economy which Nature hath instituted. The adaptation of which we now speak, between the external system of the universe and the intellectual system of man, were grossly violated by such an outrage; and it is a violence which nature would resent by one of those signal chastisements, the examples of which are so frequent in history. The truth is, that, viewed as a manifestation of the popular will which tumultuates against all that wont to command the respect and admiration of society, and is strong enough to enforce its dictations—it may well be regarded as one of the deadliest symptoms of a nation ripening for anarchy, that dread consummation by which, however, the social state, relieved of its distempers, is at length renovated like the atmosphere by a

storm, after throwing off from it the dregs and the degeneracy of an iron age.*

29. (6.) We shall do little more than state two other adaptations, although more might be noticed, and all do admit of a much fuller elucidation than we can bestow upon them. And first, there is a countless diversity of sciences, and correspondent to this, a like diversity in the tastes and talents of men, presenting, therefore, a most beneficial adaptation, between the objects of human knowledge and the powers of human knowledge. Even in one science there are often many subdivisions, each requiring a separate mental fitness, on the part of those who might select it as their own favourite walk, which they most love, and in which they are best qualified to excel. In most of the physical sciences, how distinct the business of the observation is from that of the philosophy; and how important to their progress, that, for each appropriate work, there should be men of appropriate faculties or habits, who, in the execution of their respective tasks, do exceedingly multiply and enlarge the products of the mind—even as the grosser products of human industry are multiplied by the subdivision of employment.† It is well, that, for that infinite variety of intellectual pursuits, necessary to explore

* The same effect is still more likely to ensue from the spoliation and secularization of ecclesiastical property.

† "There is no accounting for the difference of minds or inclinations, which leads one man to observe with interest the development of phenomena, another to speculate on their causes; but were it not for this happy disagreement, it may be doubted whether the higher sciences could ever have attained even their present degree of perfection."—*Sir John Herschel's Discourses*, p. 131.

all the recesses of a various and complicated external nature, there should be a like variety of intellectual predilections and powers scattered over the species —a congruity between the world of mind and the world of matter, of the utmost importance, both to the perfecting of art, and to the progress and perfecting of science. Yet it is marvellous of these respective labourers, though in effect they work simultaneously and to each other's hands, how little respect or sympathy or sense of importance, they have for any department of the general field, for any section in the wide encyclopædia of human learning, but that on which their own faculties are concentrated and absorbed. We cannot imagine aught more dissimilar and uncongenial, than the intentness of a mathematician on his demonstrations and diagrams, and the equal intentness, nay delight, of a collector or antiquarian on the faded manuscripts and uncial characters of other days. Yet in the compound result of all these multiform labours, there is a goodly and sustained harmony, between the practitioners and the theorists of science, between the pioneers and the monarchs of literature—even as in the various offices of a well-arranged household, although there should be no mutual intelligence between the subordinates who fill them, there is a supreme and connecting wisdom, which presides over and animates the whole. The goodly system of philosophy, when viewed as the product of innumerable contributions, by minds of all possible variety and men of all ages—bears like evidence to the universe being a spacious household, under the one and consistent direction of

Him who is at once the Parent and the Master of a universal family.*

30. And here it is not out of place to remark, that it is the very perfection of the Divine workmanship, which leads every inquirer to imagine a surpassing worth and grace and dignity in his own special department of it. The fact is altogether notorious, that, in order to attain a high sense of the importance of any science, and of the worth and beauty of the objects which it embraces—nothing more is necessary than the intent and persevering study of them. Whatever the walk of philosophy may be on which man shall enter, that is the walk which of all others he conceives to be most enriched, by all that is fitted to entertain the intellect, or arrest the admiration of the enamoured scholar. The astronomer who can unravel the mechanism of the heavens, or the chemist who can trace the atomic processes of matter upon earth, or the metaphysician who can assign the laws of human thought, or the grammarian who can discriminate the niceties of language, or the naturalist who can classify the flowers and the birds and the shells and the minerals and the insects which so teem and multiply in this world of wonders—each of these respective inquirers is apt to become the worshipper of his own theme, and to look with a sort of indifference, bordering on contempt, towards what he imagines the far less interesting track of his

* The benefit of subdivision in science should lead to the multiplication of professorships in our literary institutes, and at all events should prevent the parsimonious suppression of them, or the parsimonious amalgamation of the duties of two or more into one.

fellow-labourers. Now each is right in the admiration he renders to the grace and grandeur of that field which himself has explored; but all are wrong in the distaste they feel, or rather in the disregard they cast on the other fields which they have never entered. We should take the testimony of each to the worth of that which he does know, and reject the testimony of each to the comparative worthlessness of that which he does not know; and then the unavoidable inference is that that must be indeed a replete and a gorgeous universe in which we dwell—and still more glorious the Eternal Mind, from whose conception it arose, and whose prolific fiat gave birth to it, in all its vastness and variety. And instead of the temple of science having been reared, it were more proper to say, that the temple of nature had been evolved. The archetype of science is the universe; and it is in the disclosure of its successive parts, that science advances from step to step—not properly raising any new architecture of its own, but rather unveiling by degrees an architecture that is old as the creation. The labourers in philosophy create nothing; but only bring out into exhibition that which was before created. And there is a resulting harmony in their labours, however widely apart from each other they may have been prosecuted—not because they have adjusted one part to another, but because the adjustment has been already made to their hands. There comes forth, it is true, of their labours, a most magnificent harmony, yet not a harmony which they have made, but a pre-existent harmony which they have only made visible—so that when tempted

to idolize philosophy, let us transfer the homage to Him who both formed the philosopher's mind, and furnished his philosophy with all its materials.

31. (7.) The next adaptation that we shall instance is one for the introduction of which at this place we ought to apologize—it being rather one of mind to mind, and depending on a previous adaptation in each mind of the mental faculties to one another. For the right working of the mind, it is not enough that each of its separate powers shall be provided with adequate strength—they must be mixed in a certain proportion—for the greatest inconvenience might be felt, not in the defect merely, but in the excess of some of them. We have heard of too great a sensibility in the organ of hearing, giving rise to an excess in the faculty, which amounted to disease, by exposing the patient to the pain and disturbance of too many sounds, even of those so faint and low, as to be inaudible to the generality of men. In like manner we can imagine the excess of a property purely mental, of memory for example, amounting to a malady of the intellect, by exposing the victim of it to the presence and the perplexity of too many ideas, even of those which are so insignificant, that it would lighten and relieve the mind, if they had no place there at all.* Certain it is that the more

* It has been said of Sir James Mackintosh, that the excess of his memory was felt by him as an incumbrance in the writing of history—adding as it did to the difficulty of selection. It is on the same principle that the very multitude of one's ideas and words may form an obstacle to extemporaneous speaking, as has been illustrated by Dean Swift under the comparison of a thin church emptying faster than a crowded one.

full and circumstantial is the memory, the more is given for the judgment to do—its proper work of selecting and comparing becoming the more oppressive, with the number and distraction of irrelevant materials. It would have been better that these had found no original admittance within the chamber of recollection; or that only things of real and sufficient importance had left an enduring impression upon its tablet. In other words, it would have been better, that the memory had been less susceptible or less retentive than it is; and this may enable us to perceive the exquisite balancing that must have been requisite, in the construction of the mind—when the very defect of one faculty is thus made to aid and to anticipate the operations of another. He who alone knoweth the secrets of the spirits, formed them with a wisdom to us unsearchable.

32. Certain it is, however, that variety in the proportion of their faculties, is one chief cause of the difference between the minds of men. And whatever the one faculty may be, in any individual, which predominates greatly beyond the average of the rest—that faculty is selected as the characteristic by which to distinguish him; and thus he may be designed as a man of judgment, or information, or fancy, or wit, or oratory. It is this variety in their respective gifts, which originates so beautiful a dependence and reciprocity of mutual services among men; and, more especially, when any united movement or united counsel is requisite, that calls forth the co-operation of numbers. No man combines all the ingredients of mental power; and no

man is wanting in all of them—so that, while none is wholly independent of others, each possesses some share of importance in the commonwealth. The defects, even of the highest minds, may thus need to be supplemented, by the counterpart excellencies of minds greatly inferior to their own—and, in this way, the pride of exclusive superiority is mitigated; and the respect which is due to our common humanity is more largely diffused throughout society, and shared more equally among all the members of it. Nature hath so distributed her gifts among her children, as to promote a mutual helpfulness, and, what perhaps is still more precious, a mutual humility among men.

33. In almost all the instances of mental superiority, it will be found, that it is a superiority above the average level of the species, in but one thing—or that arises from the predominance of one faculty above all the rest. So much is this the case, that when the example does occur, of an individual so richly gifted as to excel in two of the general or leading powers of the mind, his reputation for the one will impede the establishment of his reputation for the other. There occurs to us one very remarkable case of the injustice, done by the men who have but one faculty, to the men who are under the misfortune of having two. In the writings of Edmund Burke, there has at length been discovered a rich mine of profound and strikingly just reflection on the philosophy of public affairs. But he felt as well as thought, and saw the greatness and beauty of things, as well as their relations; and so, he could at once penetrate

the depths, and irradiate the surface of any object that he contemplated. The light which he flung from him entered the very innermost shrines and recesses of his subject; but then it was light tinged with the hues of his own brilliant imagination, and many gazing at the splendour, recognised not the weight and the wisdom underneath. They thought him superficial, but just because themselves arrested at the surface; and either because, with the capacity of emotion but without that of judgment, or because with the capacity of judgment but without that of emotion—they, from the very meagreness and mutilation of their own faculties, were incapable of that complex homage, due to a complex object which had both beauty and truth for its ingredients. Thus it was that the very exuberance of his genius injured the man, in the estimation of the pigmies around him; and the splendour of his imagination detracted from the credit of his wisdom. Fox had the sagacity to see this; and posterity now see it. Now that, instead of a passing meteor, he is fixed by authorship in the literary hemisphere, men can make a study of him; and be at once regaled by the poetry, and instructed by the profoundness of his wondrous lucubrations.

31. (8.) Before quitting this department of the subject, we may advert, not to an individual peculiarity, but to the respective characters by which two classes of intellect are distinguished, and to the effect of their mutual action and reaction on the progress of opinion in the world.

32. The first of these intellectual tendencies may be seen in those who are distinguished by

their fond and tenacious adherence to the existing philosophy, and by their indisposition to any changes of it. They feel it painful to relinquish their wonted and established habits of thought—as if the mind were to suffer violence, by having to quit its ancient courses, and to unlearn the opinions of other days. We have no doubt that the love of repose, the aversion to that mental labour which is requisite even for the understanding of a new system, or at least for the full comprehension and estimate of its proofs—enters largely into this dislike for all novelties of speculation, into this determined preference for the doctrines in which they have been educated—although the associations too of taste and reverence share largely in the result. It is thus that the old are more disinclined to changes; and there is a peculiar reason why schools and corporations of learning should make the sturdiest resistance to them. It is a formidable thing to make head against that majority within the walls of every venerable institute, which each new opinion has to encounter at the outset; and more especially, if it tend to derange the methods of a university, or unsettle the long established practice of its masters. This will explain that inveteracy of long possession, which, operating both in many individual minds and in the bosom of colleges, gives formation and strength to what may be termed the conservative party in science or in the literary commonwealth—that party which maintains the largest and most resolute contest with all new opinions, and will not give way, till overpowered by the weight of demonstration, and energy of the public voice in their favour.

33. Opposed to this array of strength on the side of existing principles, we have the incessant operations of what may be termed the movement party in science or in the literary commonwealth —some of whom are urged onward by the mere love of novelty and change; others by the love of truth; and very many by a sort of ardent and indefinite imagination of yet unreached heights in philosophy, and of the new triumphs which await the human mind in its interminable progress from one brilliant or commanding discovery to another. We have often thought that a resulting optimism is the actual effect of the play or collision that is constantly kept up between these two rival parties in the world of letters. On the one hand it is well that philosophy should not be a fixture, but should at length give way to the accumulating force of evidence. But on the other hand it is well, that it should require a certain, and that a very considerable force of evidence, ere it shall quit its present holds, or resign the position which it now occupies. We had rather that it looked with an air of forbidden authority on the mere likelihoods of speculation, than that, lightly set agog by every specious plausibility, it should open its schools to a restless and rapid succession of yet undigested theories. It is possible to hold out too obstinately and too long; but yet it is well, that a certain balance should obtain between the adhesive and the aggressive forces in the world of speculation; and that the general mind of society should have at least enough of the sedative in its composition, to protect it from aught like violent disturbance,

or the incursion of any rash adventurer in the field of originality. And for this purpose it is well, that each novelty, kept at bay for a time, and made to undergo a sufficient probation, should be compelled thoroughly to substantiate its claims—ere it be admitted to take a place beside the philosophy which is recognised by all the authorities, and received into all the institutes of the land.

34. And they are the very same principles, which, when rightly blended, operate so beneficially, not in philosophy alone, but in politics. There is no spirit which requires more to be kept in check, than that of the mere wantonness of legislation; and so far from being annoyed by that indisposition to change, which is rather the characteristic of all established authorities, we should regard it in the light of a wholesome counteractive, by which to stay the excesses of wild and wayward innovators. There is a great purpose served in society by that law of nature, in virtue of which it is that great bodies move slowly. It would not answer, if a government were to veer and to vacillate with every breath of speculation—if easily liable to be diverted from the steadfastness of their course, by every lure or by every likelihood which sanguine adventurers held out to them. It is well, that in the ruling corporation there should be a certain strength of resistance, against which all splendid imaginations, and all unsound and hollow plausibilities, might spend their force and be dissipated; and, so far from complaining of it as an impracticable engine which is so hard and difficult of impulse, we should look upon its very unwieldi-

ness in the light of a safeguard, without which we should be driven to and fro by every wind of doctrine on a troubled sea that never rests. On these accounts we feel inclined, that, in the vessel of the body politic, there should be a preponderance of ballast over sail; and that it really is so, we might put to the account of that optimism, which, with certain reservations, obtains to a very great degree in the framework and throughout the whole mechanism of human society.

39. But this property in the machine of a government to which we now advert, does not preclude that steady and sober-minded improvement which is all that is desirable. It only restrains the advocates of improvement from driving too rapidly. It does not stop, it only retards their course, by a certain number of defeats and disappointments, which, if their course be indeed a good one, are but the stepping-stones to their ultimate triumph. Ere that the victory is gotten, they must run the gauntlet of many reverses and many mortifications; and they are not to expect that by one, but by several and successive blows of the catapulta, inveterate abuses and long established practices can possibly be overthrown. It is thus, in fact, that every weak cause is thrown back into the nonenity whence it sprung, and that every cause of inherent goodness or worth is ultimately carried—rejected, like the former, at its first and earliest overtures; but, unlike the former, coming back every time with a fresh weight of public feeling and public demonstration in its favour, till, like the abolition of the slave trade or that of commercial restrictions, causes

which had the arduous struggle of many long years to undergo, it at length obtains the conclusive seal upon it of the highest authority in the land, and a seal by which the merits of the cause are far better authenticated, than if the legislature were apt to fluctuate at the sound of every new and seemly proposal. We have therefore no quarrel with a certain *vis inertiæ* in a legislature. Only let it not be an absolute fixture; and there is the hope, with perseverance, of all that is really important or desirable in reformation. The sluggishness that has been ascribed to great corporations is, in the present instance, a good and desirable property—as being the means of separating the chaff from the wheat of all those overtures, that pour in upon representatives from every quarter of the land; and, so far from any feeling of annoyance at the retardation to which the best of them is subjected, it should be most patiently and cheerfully acquiesced in, as being in fact the process, by which it brightens into prosperity, and at length its worth and its excellence are fully manifested.

36. It is not the necessary effect of this peculiar mechanism, it is but the grievous perversion of it, when the corrupt inveteracy has withstood improvement so long, that ere it could be carried, the assailing force had to gather into the momentum of an energy that might afterwards prove mischievous, when the obstacle which provoked it into action had at length been cleared away. It is then that the vessel of the state, which might have been borne safely and prosperously onward in the course of ages, by a steady breeze and with a sufficiency of

ballast, as if slipped from her moorings is drifted uncontrollably along, and precipitated from change to change with the violence of a hurricane.

CHAPTER VI.

On the Capacities of the World for making a virtuous Species happy; and the Argument deducible from this, both for the Character of God, and the Immortality of Man.

1. We shall now attempt to unfold the most general and comprehensive of all our adaptations; and which we at the same time think the most decisive of any in establishing the righteousness of the divine character.

2. We have already stated the distinction, between the theology of those, who would make the divine goodness consist of all moral excellence; and of those, who would make it consist of benevolence alone. Attempts have been made to simplify the science of morals, by the reduction of its various duties or obligations into one element —as when it is alleged, that the virtuousness of every separate morality is reducible into benevolence, which is regarded as the central, or as the great master and generic virtue that is comprehensive of them all. There is a theoretic beauty in this imagination—yet it cannot be satisfactorily established, by all our powers of moral or mental analysis. We cannot rid ourselves of the obstinate

impression, that there is a distinct and native virtuousness, both in truth and in justice, apart from their subserviency to the good of men; and accordingly, in the ethical systems of all our most orthodox expounders, they are done separate homage to—as virtues standing forth in their own independent character, and having their own independent claims both on the reverence and observation of mankind. Now, akin with this attempt to generalize the whole of virtue into one single morality, is the attempt to generalize the character of God into one single moral perfection. Truth and justice have been exposed to the same treatment, in the one contemplation as in the other—that is, regarded more as derivatives from the higher characteristic of benevolence, than as distinct and primary characteristics themselves. The love of philosophic simplicity may have led to this in the abstract or moral question; but something more has operated in the theological question. It falls in with a still more urgent affection than the taste of man; it falls in with his hope and his sense of personal interest, that the truth and justice of the Divinity should be removed, as it were, to the background of his perspective. And accordingly, this inclination to soften, if not to suppress, the sterner perfections of righteousness and holiness, appears, not merely in the pleasing and poetic effusions of the sentimental, but also in the didactic expositions of the academic theism. It is thus that Paley, so full and effective and able in his demonstration of the natural, is yet so meagre in his demonstration of the moral attributes. It is,

in truth, the general defect, not of natural theology in itself—but of natural theology, as set forth at the termination of ethical courses, or as expounded in the schools. In this respect, the natural theology of the heart, is at variance, with the natural theology of our popular and prevailing literature. The one takes its lesson direct from conscience, which depones to the authority of truth and justice, as distinct from benevolence; and carries this lesson upwards, from that tablet of virtue which it reads on the nature of man below, to that higher tablet upon which it reads the character of God above. The other again, of more lax and adventurous speculation, would fain amalgamate all the qualities of the Godhead into one; and would make that one the beautiful and undistinguishing quality of tenderness. It would sink the venerable or the awful into the lovely; and to this it is prompted, not merely for the sake of theoretic simplicity—but in order to quell the alarms of nature, the dread and the disturbance which sinners feel, when they look to their sovereign in heaven, as a God of judgment and of unspotted holiness. Nevertheless the same conscience which tells what is sound in ethics, is ever and anon suggesting what is sound in theology—that we have to do with a God of truth, that we have to do with a God of righteousness; and this lesson is never perhaps obliterated in any breast, by the imagery, however pleasing, of a universal parent, throned in soft and smiling radiance, and whose supreme delight is to scatter beatitudes innumerable through a universal family. We cannot forget,

although we would, that justice and judgment are the habitation of His throne; and that His dwelling-place is not a mere blissful elysium or paradise of sweets, but an august and inviolable sanctuary. It is an elysium, but only to the spirits of the holy; and this sacredness, we repeat, is immediately forced upon the consciousness of every bosom, by the moral sense which is within it—however fearful a topic it may be of recoil to the simner, and of *reticence* in the demonstrations of philosophy. The sense of heaven's sacredness is not a superstitious fear. It is the instant suggestion of our moral nature. What conscience apprehends virtue to be in itself, that also it will apprehend virtue to be in the Author of conscience; and if truth and justice be constituent elements in the one, these it will regard as constituent elements in the other also. It is by learning direct of God from the phenomena of human conscience; or taking what it tells us to be virtues in themselves, for the very virtues of the Godhead, realized, in actual and living exemplification upon His character—it is thus that we escape from the illusion of poetical religionists, who, in the incense which they offer to the benign virtues of the parent, are so apt to overlook the virtues of the Lawgiver and Judge.

3. When we take this fuller view of God's moral nature—when we make account of the righteousness as well as the benevolence—when we yield to the suggestion of our own hearts, that to Him belongs the sovereign state, and, if needful, the severity of the lawgiver, as well as the fond affection of the parent—when we assign to Him the

character, which, instead of but one vritue, is comprehensive of them all—we are then on firmer vantage-ground for the establishment of a Natural Theology, in harmony, both with the lessons of conscience, and with the phenomena of the external world. Many of our academic theists have greatly crippled their argument, by confining themselves to but one feature in the character of the Divinity —as if His only wish in reference to the creatures that He had made, was a wish for their happiness; or as if, instead of the subjects of a righteous and moral government, they were but the nurslings of His tenderness. They have exiled and put forth every thing like jurisprudence from the relation in which God stands to man; and by giving the foremost place in their demonstrations to the mere beneficence of the Deity, they have made the difficulties of the subject far more perplexing and unresolvable than they needed to have been. For with benevolence alone we cannot even extenuate and much less extricate ourselves, from the puzzling difficulty of those physical sufferings to which the sentient creation, as far as our acquaintance extends with it is universally liable. It is only by admitting the sanctities along with what may be termed the humanities of the divine character, that this enigma can be at all alleviated. Whereas, if, apart from the equities of a moral government, we look to God in no other light, than mere tasteful and sentimental religionists do, or as but a benign and indulgent Father whose sole delight is the happiness of His family—there are certain stubborn anomalies which stand in the way of this frail

imagination, and would render the whole subject a hopeless and utterly intractable mystery.

4. A specimen of the weakness which attaches to the system of Natural Theology, when the infinite benevolence of the Deity is the only element which it will admit into its explanations and its reasonings, is the manner in which its advocates labour to dispose of the numerous ills, wherewith the world is infested. They have recourse to arithmetic—balancing the phenomena on each side of the question, as they would the columns of a ledger. They institute respective summations of the good and the evil; and by the preponderance of the former over the latter, hold the difficulty to be resolved. The computation is neither a sure nor an easy one; but even under the admission of its justness, it remains an impracticable puzzle—why under a Being of infinite power and infinite benevolence, there should be suffering at all. This is an enigma which the single attribute of benevolence cannot unriddle, or rather the very enigma which it has created—nor shall we even approximate to the solution of it, without the aid of other attributes to help the explanation.

5. It is under the pressure of these difficulties that refuge is taken in the imagination of a future state —where it is assumed that all the disorders of the present scene are to be repaired, and full compensation made for the sufferings of our earthly existence. It is affirmed, that, although the body dies, the soul is unperishable; and, after it hath burst its unfettered way from the prison-house of its earthly tabernacle, that it will expatiate for ever

in the full buoyancy and delight of its then emancipated energies—that, even as from the lacerated shell of the inert chrysalis the winged insect rises in all the pride of its now expanded beauty among the fields of light and ether which are above it, so the human spirit finds its way through the opening made by death upon its corporeal framework among the glories of the upper Elysium. It is this immortality which is supposed to unriddle all the difficulties that attach to our present condition; which converts the evil that is in the world, into the instrument of a greatly over-passing good; and affords a scene for the imagination to rest upon, where all the anomalies which now exercise us shall be rectified, and where, from the larger prospects we shall then have the whole march and destiny of man, the ways of God to His creatures shall appear in all the lustre of their full and noble vindication.

6. But as the superiority of the happiness over the misery of the world, affords insufficient premises on which to conclude the benevolence of God, *so long as God is conceived of under the partial view of possessing but this as his alone moral attribute*—when that benevolence is employed as the argument for some ulterior doctrine in Natural Theology, it must impart to this latter the same inconclusiveness by which itself is characterized. The proof and the thing proved must be alike strong or alike weak. If the excess of enjoyment over suffering in the life that now is, be a matter of far too doubtful calculation, on which to rest a confident inference in favour of the divine benevolence; then, let this

benevolence have no other prop to lean upon, and in its turn, it is far too doubtful a premise, on which to infer a coming immortality. Accordingly, to help out the argument, many of our slender and sentimental theists, who will admit of no other moral attribute for the divinity than the paternal attribute of kind affection for the creatures who have sprung from Him, do, in fact, assume the thing to be proved, and reason in a circle. The mere balance of the pleasures and pains of the present life, is greatly too uncertain, for what may be called an initial footing to this argument. But let a future life be assumed, in which all the defects and disorders of the present are to be repaired; and this may reconcile the doctrine of the benevolence of God, with the otherwise stumbling fact of the great actual wretchedness that is now in the world. Out of the observed phenomena of life and an assumed immortality together, a tolerable argument may be raised for this most pleasing and amiable of all the moral characteristics; but it is obvious that the doctrine of immortality enters into the premises of this first argument. But how is the immortality itself proved? not by the phenomena of life alone, but by these phenomena taken in conjunction with the divine benevolence—which benevolence, therefore, enters into the premise of the second argument. In the one argument, the doctrine of immortality is required to prove the benevolence of God. In the other, this benevolence is required to prove the immortality. Each is used as an assumption for the establishment of the other; and this nullifies the reasoning for both.

Either of these terms—that is, the divine benevolence, or a future state of compensation for the evils and inequalities of the present one—either of them, if admitted, may be held a very sufficient, or, at least, likely consideration on which to rest the other. But it makes very bad reasoning to vibrate between both—first to go forth with the assumption that God is benevolent, and therefore it is impossible that a scene so dark and disordered as that immediately before us can offer to our contemplation the full and final development of all his designs for the human family; and then, feeling that this scene does not afford a sufficient basis on which to rest the demonstration of this attribute, to strengthen the basis and make it broader by the assertion, that it is not from a part of His ways, but from their complete and comprehensive whole, as made up both of time and eternity, that we draw the inference of a benevolent Deity. There is no march of argument. We swing as it were between two assumptions. It is like one of those cases in geometry, which remains indeterminate for the want of data. And the only effectual method of being extricated from such an ambiguity, would be the satisfactory assurance either of a benevolence independent of all considerations of immortality, or of an immortality independent of all considerations of the benevolence.

7. But then it should be recollected that it is the partiality of our contemplation, and it alone which incapacitates this whole argument. There is a sickly religion of taste which clings exclusively to the parental benevolence of God; and will not,

cannot, brave the contemplation of His righteousness. It is this which makes the reasoning as feeble, as the sentiment is flimsy. It, in fact, leaves the system of natural theology without a groundwork—first to argue for immortality on the doubtful assumption of a supreme benevolence, and then to argue this immortality in proof of the benevolence. The whole fabric, bereft of argument and strength, is ready to sink under the weight of unresolved difficulties. The mere benevolence of the Deity is not so obviously or decisively the lesson of surrounding phenomena, as, of itself, to be the foundation of a solid inference regarding either the character of God or the prospects of man. If we would receive the full lesson—if we would learn all which these phenomena, when rightly and attentively regarded, are capable of teaching—if along with the present indications of a benevolence, we take the present indications of a righteousness in God—out of these blended characteristics, we should have materials for an argument of firmer texture. It is to the leaving out of certain data, even though placed within the reach of observation, that the infirmity of the argument is owing—whereas, did we employ aright all the data in our possession, we might incorporate them together into the solid groundwork of a solid reasoning. It is by our sensitive avoidance of certain parts in this contemplation, that we enfeeble the cause. We should find a stable basis in existing appearances, did we give them a fair and full interpretation—as indicating not only the benevolence of God, but, both by the course of

nature, and the laws of man's moral economy, indicating His love of righteousness and hatred of iniquity. It might not resolve, but it would alleviate the mystery of things, could we within the sphere of actual observation, collect notices, not merely of a God who rejoiced in the physical happiness of His creatures, but of a God who had respect unto their virtue. Now the great evidence for this latter characteristic of the Divinity, lies near at hand—even among the intimacies of our own felt and familiar nature. It is not fetched by imagination from a distance, for every man has it within himself. The supremacy of conscience is a fact or phenomenon of man's moral constitution; and from this law of the heart, we pass, by direct and legitimate inference, to the character of Him who established it there. In a law, we read the character of the lawgiver; and this, whether it be a felt or a written law. We learn from the phenomena of conscience, that, however God may will the happiness of his creatures, His paramount and peremptory demand is for their virtue. He is the moral governor of a kingdom, as well as the father of a family; and it is a partial view that we take of Him, unless, along with the kindness which belongs to Him as a parent, we have respect unto that authority which belongs to him as a sovereign and a judge. We have direct intimation of this in our own bosoms, in the constant assertion which is made there on the side of virtue, in the discomfort and remorse which attend its violation.

8. But though conscience be our original and chief instructor in the righteousness of God, the

same lesson may be learned in another way. It may be gathered from the phenomena of human life—even those very phenomena, which so perplex the mind, so long as in quest of but one attribute and refusing to admit the evidence or even entertain the notion of any other,—it cherishes a partial and prejudiced view of the Deity. Those theists, who, in this spirit, have attempted to strike a balance between the pleasures and the pains of sentient nature, and to ground thereupon the very doubtful inference of the divine benevolence—seldom or never think of connecting these pleasures and pains with the moral causes, which, whether proximately or remotely, go before them. Without adverting to these, they rest their conclusion on the affirmed superiority, however ill or uncertainly made out, of the physical enjoyments over the physical sufferings of life. Now we hold it of capital importance in this argument, that, in our own species at least, both these enjoyments and these sufferings are mainly resolvable into moral causes—insomuch that, in the vast majority of cases, the deviation from happiness, can be traced to an anterior deviation from virtue; and that, apart from death and accident and unavoidable disease, the wretchedness of humanity is due to a vicious and ill-regulated *morale*. When we thus look to the ills of life in their immediate origin, though it may not altogether dissipate, it goes far to reduce, and even to explain the mystery of their existence. Those evils which vex and agitate man, emanate, in the great amount of them, from the fountain of his own heart; and come forth, not

of a distempered material, but of a distempered moral economy. Were each separate infelicity referred to its distinct source, we should, generally speaking, arrive at some moral perversity, whether of the affections or of the temper—so that but for the one, the other would not have been realized. It is true, that, perhaps in every instance, some external cause may be assigned, for any felt annoyance to which our nature is liable; but then, it is a cause without, operating on a sensibility within. So that in all computations, whether of suffering or of enjoyment, the state of the subjective or recipient mind must be taken into account, as well as the influences which play upon it from the surrounding world; and what we affirm is, that, to a rightly conditioned mind, the misery would be reduced and the happiness augmented tenfold. When disappointment agonizes the heart; or a very slight, perhaps unintentional neglect, lights up in many a soul the fierceness of resentment; or coldness, and disdain, and the mutual glances of contempt and hatred, circulate a prodigious mass of infelicity through the world—these are to be ascribed, not to the untowardness of outward circumstances, but to the untowardness of man's own constitution, and are the fruits of a disordered spiritual system. And the same may be said of the poverty which springs from indolence or dissipation; of the disgrace which comes on the back of misconduct; of the pain or uneasiness which festers in every heart that is the prey, whether of licentious or malignant passions: in short, of the general restlessness and unhingement of every

spirit, which, thrown adrift from the restraints of principle, has no well-spring of satisfaction in itself, but precariously vacillates, in regard to happiness, with the hazard and the casual fluctuation of outward things. There are, it is true, sufferings purely physical, which belong to the sentient and not to the moral nature—as the maladies of infant disease, and the accidental inflictions wherewith the material frame is sometimes agonized. Still it will be found, that the vast amount of human wretchedness, can be directly referred to the waywardness and morbid state of the human will—to the character of man, and not to the condition which he occupies.

9. Now what is the legitimate argument for the character of God, not from the mere existence of misery, but from the existence of misery thus originated? Wretchedness, of itself, were fitted to cast an uncertainty, even a suspicion, on the benevolence of God. But wretchedness as the result of wickedness, may not indicate the negation of this one attribute. It may only indicate the reality or the presence of another. Suffering without a cause and without an object, may be the infliction of a malignant being. But suffering in alliance with sin, should lead to a very different conclusion. When thus related it may cast no impeachment on the benevolence, and only bespeak the righteousness of God. It tells us that however much He may love the happiness of His creatures, He loves their virtue more. So that, instead of extinguishing the evidence of one perfection, it may leave this evidence entire, and

bring out into open manifestation another perfection of the Godhead.

10. In attempting to form our estimate of the divine character from the existing phenomena, the fair proceeding would be, not to found it on the actual miseries which abound in the world, peopled with a depraved species—but on the fitnesses which abound in the world, to make a virtuous species happy. We should try to figure its result on human life, were perfect virtue to revisit earth, and take up its abode in every family. The question is, are we so constructed and so accommodated, that, in the vast majority of cases we, if morally right, should be physically happy. What, we should ask, is the real tendency of nature's laws—whether to minister enjoyment to the good or the evil? It were a very strong, almost an unequivocal testimony to the righteousness of Him, who framed the system of things and all its adaptations—if, while it secured a general harmony between the virtue of mankind and their happiness or peace, it as constantly impeded either the prosperity or the heart's ease of the profligate and the lawless. Now of this we might be informed by an actual survey of human life. We can justly imagine the consequences upon human society—were perfect uprightness and sympathy and goodwill to obtain universally; were every man to look to his fellow with a brother's eye; were a universal courteousness to reign in our streets and our houses and our market-places, and this to be the spontaneous emanation of a universal cordiality; were each man's interest and reputation as safe in

the custody of another, as he now strives to make them by a jealous guardianship of his own; were, on the one hand, a prompt and eager benevolence on the part of the rich, ever on the watch to meet, nay, to overpass all the wants of humanity, and, on the other hand, an honest moderation and independence on the part of the poor, to be a full defence for their superiors against the encroachments of deceit and rapacity; were liberality to walk diffusively abroad among men, and love to settle pure and unruffled in the bosom of families; were that moral sunshine to arise in every heart, which purity and innocence and kind affection are ever sure to kindle there; and, even when some visitation from without was in painful dissonance with the harmony within, were a thousand sweets ready to be poured into the cup of tribulation from the feeling and the friendship of all the good who were around us. On this single transition from vice to virtue among men, does there not hinge the alternative between a pandæmonium and a paradise? If the moral elements were in full play and operation amongst us, should we still continue to fester and be unhappy from the want of the physical? Or, is it not rather true, that all nature smiles in beauty, or wantons in bounteousness for our enjoyment—were but the disease of our spirits medicated, were there but moral soundness in the heart of man?

11. And what must be the character of the Being who formed such a world, where the moral and the physical economies are so adjusted to each other, that virtue, if universal, would bring ten

thousand blessings and beatitudes in its train, and turn our earth into an elysium—whereas nothing so distempers the human spirit, and so multiplies distress in society, as the vice and the violence and the varieties of moral turpitude wherewith it is infested. Would a God who loved iniquity and who hated righteousness have created such a world? Would He have so attuned the organism of the human spirit, that the consciousness of worth should be felt through all its recesses, like the oil of gladness? Or would he have so constructed the mechanism of human society, that it should never work prosperously for the general good of the species, but by means of truth and philanthropy and uprightness? Would the friend and patron of falsehood have let such a world out of his hands? Or would an unholy being have so fashioned the heart of man—that, wayward and irresolute as he is, he never feels so ennobled, as by the high resolve that would spurn every base allurement of sensuality away from him; and never breathes so etherially, as when he maintains that chastity of spirit which would recoil even from one unhallowed imagination; and never rises to such a sense of grandeur and godlike elevation, as when principle hath taken the direction, and is vested with full ascendancy over the restrained and regulated passions? What other inference can be drawn from such sequences as these, but that our moral architect loves the virtue He thus follows up with the delights of a high and generous complacency; and execrates the vice He thus follows up with disgust and degradation? If we look but to

misery unconnected and alone, we may well doubt the benevolence of the Deity. But should it not modify the conclusion, to have ascertained—that, in proportion as virtue made entrance upon the world, misery would retire from it? There is nothing to spoil Him of this perfection, in a misery so originated; but, leaving this perfection untouched, it attaches to Him another, and we infer, that He is not merely benevolent, but benevolent and holy. After that the moral cause has been discovered for the unhappiness of man, we feel Him to be a God of benevolence still; that He wills the happiness of his creatures, but with this reservation, that the only sound and sincere happiness He awards to them, is happiness through the medium of virtue; that still He is willing to be the dispenser of joy substantial and unfading, but of no such joy apart from moral excellence; that He loves the gratification of His children, but he loves their righteousness more; that dear to Him is the happiness of all his offspring, but dearer still their worth; and that therefore He, the moral governor will so conduct the affairs of His empire, as that virtue and happiness, or that vice and misery shall be associated.

12. We have already said, that, by inspecting a mechanism, we can infer both the original design of Him who framed it, and the derangement it has subsequently undergone—even as by the inspection of a watch, we can infer, from the place of command which its regulator occupies, that it was made for the purpose of moving regularly; and that, notwithstanding the state of disrepair and aberration

into which it may have fallen. And so, from the obvious place of rightful supremacy which is occupied by the conscience of man in his moral system, we can infer that virtue was the proper and primary design of his creation; and that, notwithstanding the actual prevalence of obviously inferior principles, over the habits and history of his life. Connect this with the grand and general adaptation of External Nature for which we have now been contending—even the capacity of that world in which we are placed for making a virtuous species happy; and it were surely far juster, in arguing for the divine character, that we founded our interpretation on the happiness which man's original constitution is fitted to secure for him, than on the misery which he suffers by that constitution having been in some way perverted. It is from the native and proper tendency of aught which is made, that we conclude as to the mind and disposition of the maker; and not from the actual effect, when that tendency has been rendered abortive, by the extrinsic operation of some disturbing force on an else goodly and well-going mechanism. The original design of the Creator may be read in the natural, the universal tendency of things; and surely, it speaks strongly both for His benevolence and his righteousness that nothing is so fitted to ensure the general happiness of society as the general virtue of them who compose it. And if, instead of this, we behold a world, ill at ease, with its many heart-burnings and many disquietudes—the fair conclusion is, that the beneficial tendencies which have been established therein,

and which are therefore due to the benevolence of God, have all been thwarted by the moral perversity of man. The compound lesson to be gathered from such a contemplation is, that God is the friend of human happiness but the enemy of human vice —seeing, He hath set up an economy in which the former would have grown up and prospered universally, had not the latter stepped in and overborne it.

13. We are now on a groundwork of more firm texture, for an argument in behalf of man's immortality. But it is only by a more comprehensive view both of the character of God, and the actual state of the world—that we obtain as much evidence both for His benevolence and His righteousness, as might furnish logical premises for the logical inference of a future state.

14. We have already stated that the miseries of life, in their great and general amount, are resolvable into moral causes; and did each man suffer here, accurately in proportion to his own sins, there might be less reason for the anticipation of another state hereafter. But this proportion is, in no individual instance perhaps, ever realized on this side of death. The miseries of the good are still due to a moral perversity—though but to the moral perversity of others, not of his own. He suffers from the injustice and calumny and violence and evil tempers of those who are around him. On the large and open theatre of the world, the cause of oppression is often the triumphant one; and, in the bosom of families, the most meek and innocent of the household, are frequently the victims for life,

of a harsh and injurious though unseen tyranny. It is this inequality of fortune, or rather of enjoyment, between the good and the evil, which forms the most popular, and enters as a constituent part at least, into the most powerful argument, which nature furnishes, for the immortality of the soul. We cannot imagine of a God of righteousness, that He will leave any question of justice unsettled; and there is nothing which more powerfully suggests to the human conscience the apprehension of a life to come, than that in this life, there should be so many unsettled questions of justice—first between man and man, secondly between man and his Maker.

15. The strength of the former consideration lies in the multiplicity, and often the fearful aggravation, of the unredressed wrongs inflicted every day by man upon his fellows. The history of human society teems with these; and the unappeased cry, whether for vengeance or reparation, rises to heaven because of them. We might here expatiate on the monstrous, the wholesale atrocities, perpetrated on the defenceless by the strong; and which custom has almost legalized—having stood their ground against the indignation of the upright and the good for many ages. Perhaps for the most gigantic example of this, in the dark annals of our guilty world, we should turn our eyes upon injured Africa—that devoted region, where the lust of gain has made the fiercest and fellest exhibition of its hardihood; and whose weeping families are broken up in thousands every year, that the families of Europe might the more delicately and luxuri-

ously regale themselves. It is a picturesque, and seems a powerful argument for some future day of retribution, when we look, on the one hand, to the prosperity of the lordly oppressor, wrung from the sufferings of a captive and subjugated people; and look, on the other, to the tears and the untold agony of the hundreds beneath him, whose lives of dreariness and hard labour are ten fold embittered, by the imagery of that dear and distant land, from which they have been irrecoverably torn. But, even within the confines of civilized society, there do exist materials for our argument. There are cruelties and wrongs innumerable, in the conduct of business; there are even cruelties and wrongs, in the bosom of families. There are the triumphs of injustice; the success of deep-laid and malignant policy on the one side, on the other the ruin and the overthrow of unprotected weakness. Apart from the violence of the midnight assault, or the violence of the highway—there is, even under the forms of law, and amid the blandness of social courtesies, a moral violence that carries as grievous and substantial iniquity in its train; by which friendless and confiding simplicity may at once be bereft of its rights, and the artful oppressor be enriched by the spoliation. Have we never seen the bankrupt rise again with undiminished splendour, from amid the desolation and despair of the families that have been ruined by him? Or, more secret though not less severe, have we not seen the inmates of a wretched home doomed to a hopeless and unhappy existence, under the sullen brow of the tyrant who lorded over them? There are

sufferings from which there is no redress or rectification upon earth; inequalities between man and man, of which there is no adjustment here—but because of that very reason, there is the utmost desire, and we might add expectancy of our nature, that there shall be an adjustment hereafter. In the unsated appetency of our hearts for justice, there is all the force of an appeal to the Being who planted the appetite within us; and we feel that if Death is to make sudden disruption, in the midst of all these unfinished questions, and so to leave them eternally—we feel a violence done both to our own moral constitution, and to the high jurisprudence of Him who framed us.

16. But there are furthermore, in this life, unfinished questions between man and his Maker. The same conscience which asserts its own supremacy within the breast, suggests the God and the Moral Governor who placed it there. It is thus that man not only takes cognizance of his own delinquencies; but he connects them with the thought of a lawgiver to whom he is accountable. He passes by one step, and with rapid inference, from the feeling of a judge who is within, to the fear of a Judge who sits in high authority over him. With the sense of a reigning principle in his own constitution, there stands associated the sense of a reigning power in the universe—the one challenging the prerogatives of a moral law, the other avenging the violation of them. Even the hardiest in guilt are not insensible to the force of this sentiment. They feel it, as did Catiline and the worst of Roman emperors, in the horrors

of remorse. There is, in spite of themselves, the impression of an avenging God—not the less founded upon reasoning, that it is the reasoning of but one truth or rather of but one transition, from a thing intimately known to a thing immediately concluded, from the reckoning of a felt and a present conscience within, to the more awful reckoning of a God who is the author of conscience and who knoweth all things. Now, it is thus, that men are led irresistibly to the anticipation of a future state —not by their hopes, we think, but by their fears; not by a sense of unfulfilled promises, but by the sense and the terror of unfulfilled penalties; by their sense of a judgment not yet executed, of a wrath not yet discharged upon them. Hence the impression of a futurity upon all spirits, whither are carried forward the issues of a jurisprudence, which bears no marks but the contrary of a full and final consummation on this side of death. The prosperity of many wicked who spend their days in resolute and contemptuous irreligion; the practical defiance of their lives to the bidding of conscience, and yet a voice of remonstrance and of warning from this said conscience which they are unable wholly to quell; the many emphatic denunciations, not uttered in audible thunder from above, but uttered in secret and impressive whispers from within—these all point to accounts between God and His creatures that are yet unfinished. If there be no future state, the great moral question between heaven and earth, broken off at the middle, is frittered into a degrading mockery. There is violence done to the continuity of things. The

moral constitution of man is stript of its significancy and the Author of that constitution is stript of His wisdom and authority and honour. That consistent march which we behold in all the cycles, and progressive movements of the natural economy, is, in the moral economy, brought to sudden arrest and disruption—if death annihilate the man, instead of only transforming him. And it is only the doctrine of his immortality by which all can be adjusted and harmonized.*

17. And there is one proof for the immortality of the soul distinct from the one that we have now set forth—yet founded on adaptation. For every desire or every faculty, whether in man or in the inferior animals, there seems a counterpart object in external nature. Let it be either an appetite or a power; and let it reside either in the sentient or in the intellectual or in the moral economy—still there exists a something without that is altogether suited to it, and which seems to be expressly provided for its gratification. There is light for the eye; there is air for the lungs; there is food for the ever-recurring appetite of hunger; there is water for the appetite of thirst; there is society for the love, whether of fame or of fellowship; there is a boundless field in all the objects of all the sciences for the exercise of curiosity—in a word, there seems not one affection in the living creature, which is not met by a counterpart and a

* It is well said by Mr. Davison, in his profound and original work on Prophecy—that "Conscience and the *present* constitution of things are not corresponding terms. The one is not the object of perception to the other. It is conscience and the issue of things which go together."

congenial object in the surrounding creation. It is this, in fact, which forms an important class of those adaptations, on which the argument for a Deity is founded. The adaptation of the parts to each other within the organic structure, is distinct from the adaptation of the whole to the things of circumambient nature; and is well unfolded in a separate chapter by Paley, on the relation of inanimate bodies to animated nature. But there is another chapter on prospective contrivances, in which he unfolds to us other adaptations, that approximate still more nearly to our argument. They consist of embryo arrangements or parts, not of immediate use, but to be of use eventually —preparations going on in the animal economy, whereof the full benefit is not to be realized, till some future and often considerably distant development shall have taken place; such as the teeth buried in their sockets, that would be inconvenient during the first months of infancy, but come forth when it is sufficiently advanced for another and a new sort of nourishment; such as the manifold preparations, anterior to the birth, that are of no use to the fœtus, but are afterwards to be of indispensable use in a larger and freer state of existence; such as the instinctive tendencies to action that appear before even the instruments of action are provided, as in the calf of a day old to butt with its head before it has been furnished with horns. Nature abounds, not merely in present expedients for an immediate use, but in providential expedients for a future one; and, as far as we can observe, we have no reason to believe, that, either in the

first or second sort of expedients, there has ever aught been noticed, which either bears on no object now, or lands in no result afterwards. We may perceive in this, the glimpse of an argument for the soul's immortality. We may enter into the analogy, as stated by Dr. Ferguson, when he says—"whoever considers the anatomy of the fœtus, will find, in the strength of bones and muscles, in the organs of respiration and digestion, sufficient indications of a design to remove his being into a different state. The observant and the intelligent may perhaps find in the mind of man parallel signs of his future destination."*

* Dr. Ferguson's reasoning upon this subject is worthy of being extracted more largely than we have room for in the text—"If the human fœtus," he observes, "were qualified to reason of his prospects in the womb of his parent, as he may afterwards do in his range on this terrestrial globe, he might no doubt apprehend in the breach of his umbilical chord, and in his separation from the womb a total extinction of life, for how could he conceive it to continue after his only supply of nourishment from the vital stock of his parent had ceased? He might indeed observe many parts of his organization and frame which should seem to have no relation to his state in the womb. For what purpose, he might say, this duct which leads from the mouth to the intestines? Why these bones that each apart become hard and stiff, while they are separated from one another by so many flexures or joints? Why these joints in particular made to move upon hinges, and these germs of teeth, which are pushing to be felt above the surface of the gums? Why the stomach through which nothing is made to pass? And these spungy lungs, so well fitted to drink up the fluids, but into which the blood that passes every where else is scarcely permitted to enter?

"To these querics, which the fœtus was neither qualified to make nor to answer, we are now well apprized the proper answer would be—the life which you now enjoy is but temporary; and those particulars which now seem to you so preposterous, are a provision which nature has made for a future course of life which you have to run, and in which their use and propriety will appear sufficiently evident.

"Such are the prognostics of a future destination that might be

18. Now what inference shall we draw from this remarkable law in nature, that there is nothing waste and nothing meaningless in the feelings and faculties wherewith living creatures are endowed? For each desire there is a counterpart object, for each faculty there is room and opportunity of exercise—either in the present, or in the coming futurity. Now, but for the doctrine of immortality, man would be an exception to this law. He would stand forth as an anomaly in nature—with aspirations in his heart for which the universe had no antitype to offer, with capacities of understanding and thought, that never were to be followed, by objects of corresponding greatness, through the whole history of his being. It were a violence to the harmony of things, whereof no other example can be given; and, in as far as an argument can be founded on this harmony for the wisdom of Him who made all things—it were a reflection on one of the conceived, if not one of the ascertained attributes of the Godhead. To feel the force of this argument, we have only to look to the obvious adaptations of his powers to a larger and more enduring theatre—to the dormant faculties which are in him for the mastery and acquisition of all the sciences, and yet the partial ignorance of all, and the profound or total ignorance of many, in which he spends the short-lived years of his present existence—to the boundless, but here, the unopened capabilities which lie up in him, for the compre-

collected from the state of the fœtus; and similar prognostics of a destination still future might be collected from present appearances in the life and condition of man."

hension of truths that never once draw his attention on this side of death, for the contemplative enjoyment both of moral and intellectual beauties which have never here revealed themselves to his gaze. The whole labour of this mortal life would not suffice, for traversing in full extent any one of the sciences; and yet, there may lie undeveloped in his bosom, a taste and talent for them all—none of which he can even singly overtake; for each science, though definite in its commencement, has its out-goings in the infinite and the eternal. There is in man, a restlessness of ambition; an interminable longing after nobler and higher things, which nought but immortality and the greatness of immortality can satiate; a dissatisfaction with the present, which never is appeased by all that the world has to offer; an impatience and distaste with the felt littleness of all that he finds, and an unsated appetency for something larger and better, which he fancies in the perspective before him—to all which there is nothing like among any of the inferior animals, with whom, there is a certain squareness of adjustment, if we may so term it, between each desire and its correspondent gratification. The one is evenly met by the other; and there is a fulness and definiteness of enjoyment, up to the capacity of enjoyment. Not so with man, who both from the vastness of his propensities and the vastness of his powers, feels himself straitened and beset in a field too narrow for him. He alone labours under the discomfort of an incongruity between his circumstances and his powers; and, unless there be new circumstances awaiting

him in a more advanced state of being, he, the noblest of nature's products here below, would turn out to be the greatest of her failures.

19. We are unwilling to quit this department of proof without adverting to one subject pregnant with adaptations, which is furnished by the history of moral science; and is replete, we have long thought, with the materials of a very strong and comprehensive argument.

20. We have already adverted to the objective nature of virtue, and the subjective nature of man, as forming two wholly distinct objects of contemplation. It is the latter and not the former which indicates the moral character of God. The mere system of ethical doctrine is no more fitted to supply an argument for this character, than would the system of geometry. It is not geometry in the abstract, but geometry as embodied in the heavens, or in the exquisite structures of the terrestrial physics—which bespeaks the skill of the Artificer who framed them. In like manner it is not moral science in the abstract, but the moral constitution of beings so circumstanced and so made, that virtue is the only element in which their permanent individual or social happiness can be realized—which bespeaks the great Parent of the human family to be himself the lover and the exemplar of righteousness. In a word, it is not from an abstraction, but from the facts of a creation, that our lesson respecting the Divine character, itself a fact, is to be learned; and it is by keeping this distinction in view, that we obtain one important help for drawing from the very conflict and diversity of moral

theories, on the nature of virtue, a clear, nay, a cumulative argument for the virtuous nature of the Godhead.

21. The painful suspicion is apt to intrude upon us, that virtue may not be a thing of any substance or stability at all—when we witness the confusion and the controversy into which moralists have fallen, on the subject of its elementary principles. But, to allay this feeling, it should be observed, in the first place, that, with all the perplexity which obtains on the question of what virtue, in the abstract or in its own essential and constituting quality, is —there is a pretty general agreement among moralists, as to what the separate and specific virtues of the human character are. According to the selfish system, temperance may be a virtue, because of its subservience to the good of the individual; while by the system of utility it is a virtue, because through its observation, our powers and services are kept entire for the good of society. But again, beside this controversy which relates to the nature of virtue in itself, and which may be termed the objective question in morals—there is a subjective or an organic question which relates, not to the existence, but to the origin and formation of the notion or feeling of virtue in the human mind. The question, for example, whether virtue be a thing of opinion or a thing of sentiment, belongs to this class. Now, in regard to all those questions which respect the origin or the pedigree of our moral judgments, it should not be forgotten, that, while the controvertists are at issue upon this, they are nearly unanimous, as to morality itself

being felt by the mind as a matter of supreme obligation. They dispute about the moral sense in man, or about the origin and constitution of the court of conscience; but they have no dispute about the supreme authority of conscience—even as, in questions of civil polity and legislation, there may be no dispute about the rightful authority of some certain court, while there may be antiquarian doubts and differences on the subject of its origin and formation. Dr. Smith, for example, while he has his own peculiar views on the origin of our moral principles, never questions their authority. He differs from others, in regard to the rationale, or the anterior steps of that process, which at length terminates in a decision of the mind, on the merit or demerit of a particular action. The rightness and the supremacy of that decision are not in the least doubted by him. There may be a metaphysical controversy about the mode of arriving at our moral judgment, and at the same time a perfect concurrence in it as the guide and the regulator of human conduct—just as there may be an anatomical controversy about the structure of the eye or the terminations of the optic nerve, and a perfect confidence with all parties, in the correctness of those intimations which the eye gives of the position of external objects and their visible properties. By attending to this we obtain a second important help for eliciting from the diversity of theories on the nature of virtue, a cumulative argument for the virtuous nature of the Godhead.

22. When the conflict then of its opposing theories, would seem to bring fearful insecurity on

moral science, let it not be forgotten, that the very multitude of props and securities, by which virtue is upholden, is that which has given rise to the conflict. There is little or no scepticism in regard to the worth or substantive being of morality, but chiefly in regard to its sustaining principle; and it is because of so much to sustain it, or of the many distinct and firm props which it rests upon, that there has been such an amount of ethical controversy in the world. There has been many a combat, and many a combatant—not because of the baselessness of morality, but because it rests on a basis of so many goodly pillars, and because of such a varied convenience and beauty in the elevation of the noble fabric. The reason of so much controversy is, that each puny controversialist, wedded to his own exclusive view of an edifice too mighty and majestic for his grasp, has either selected but one of the upholding props, and affirmed it to be the only support of the architecture; or attended to but one of its graces and utilities, and affirmed it to be the alone purpose of the magnificent building. The argument of each, whether on the foundation of virtue or on its nature, when beheld aright, will be found a distinct trophy to its worth—for each can plead some undoubted excellence or good effect of virtue in behalf of his own theory. Each may have so magnified the property which himself had selected—as that those properties of virtue which others had selected, were thrown into the shade, or at most but admitted as humble attendants, in the retinue of his own great principle. And so the

controversy is not, whether morality be a solidly constituted fabric; but what that is which constitutes its solidity, and which should be singled out as the keystone of the fabric. Each of the champions in this warfare has fastened on a different keystone; and each pushes the triumph against his adversary by a demonstration of its firmness. Or in other words, virtue is compassed about with such a number of securities, and possesses such a superabundance of strength, as to have given room for the question that was raised about Samson of old—what that is wherein its great strength lies. It is like the controversy which sometimes arises about a building of perfect symmetry—when sides are taken, and counter-explanations are advanced and argued, about the one characteristic or constituting charm, which hath conferred upon it so much gracefulness. It is even so of morality. Each partisan hath advocated his own system; and each, in doing so, hath more fully exhibited some distinct property or perfection of moral rectitude. Morality is not neutralized by this conflict of testimonies; but rises in statelier pride, and with augmented security, from the foam and the turbulence which play around its base. To her, this conflict yields, not a balance, but a summation of testimonies; and, instead of an impaired, it is a cumulative argument, that may be reared out of the manifold controversies to which she has given rise. For when it is asserted by one party in the strife, that the foundation of all morality is the right of God to the obedience of his creatures—let God's absolute right be fully conceded to them.

And when others reply, that, apart from such right, there is a native and essential rightness in morality, let this be conceded also. There is indeed such a rightness, which, anterior to law, hath had everlasting residence in the character of the Godhead; and which prompted him to a law, all whose enactments bear the impress of purest morality. And when the advocates of the selfish system affirm, that the good of self is the sole aim and principle of virtue; while we refuse their theory, let us at least admit the fact to which all its plausibility is owing—that nought conduces more surely to happiness, than the strict observation of all the recognised moralities of human conduct. And when a fourth party affirms that nought but the useful is virtuous; and, in support of their theory, can state the unvarying tendencies of virtue in the world towards the highest good of the human family—let it forthwith be granted, that the same God, who blends in his own person both the rightness of morality and the right of law, that He hath so devised the economy of things, and so directs its processes, as to make peace and prosperity follow in the train of righteousness. And when the position that virtue is its own reward, is cast as another dogma into the whirlpool of debate, let it be fondly allowed, that the God, who delights in moral excellence himself, hath made it the direct minister of enjoyment to him, who, formed after his own image, delights in it also. And when others, expatiating on the beauty of virtue, would almost rank it among the objects of taste rather than of principle—let this be fol-

lowed up by the kindred testimony, that, in all its exhibitions, there is indeed a supreme gracefulness; and that God, rich and varied in all the attestations which He has given of His regard to it, hath so endowed His creatures, that, in moral worth, they have the beatitudes of taste as well as the beatitudes of conscience. And should there be philosophers who say of morality that it is wholly founded upon the emotions—let it at least be granted, that He whose hand did frame our internal mechanism, has attuned it in the most correct and delicate respondency, with all the moralities of which human nature is capable. And should there be other philosophers who affirm that morality hath a real and substantive existence in the nature of things, so as to make it as much an object of judgment distinct from him who judges, as are the eternal and immutable truths of geometry—let it with gratitude be acknowledged that the mind is so constituted as to have the same firm hold of the moral which it has of the mathematical relations; and if this prove nothing else, it at least proves, that the Author of our constitution hath stamped there a clear and legible impress on the side of virtue. We should not exclude from this argument even the degrading systems of Hobbes and Mandeville; the former representing virtue as the creation of human policy, and the latter representing its sole principle to be the love of human praise—for even they tell thus much, the one that virtue is linked with the well-being of the community, the other that it has an echo in every bosom. We would not dissever all

these testimonies; but bind them together into the sum and strength of a cumulative argument. The controversialists have lost themselves, but it is in a wilderness of sweets—out of which the materials might be gathered, of such an incense at the shrine of morality, as should be altogether overpowering. Each party hath selected but one of its claims; and in the anxiety to exalt it, would shed a comparative obscurity over all the rest. This is the contest between them—not whether morality be destitute of claims; but what, out of the number that she possesses, is the great and pre-eminent claim on which man should do her homage. Their controversy perhaps never may be settled; but to make the cause of virtue suffer on this account, would be to make it suffer from the very force and abundance of its recommendations.

23. But this contemplation is pregnant with another inference, beside the worth of virtue—even the righteous character of Him, who, for the sake of upholding it hath brought such a number of contingencies together. When we look to the systems of utility and selfishness, let us look upwardly to Him, through whose ordination alone it is, that virtue hath such power to prosper the arrangements of life and of society. Or when told of the principle that virtue is its own reward, let us not forget Him, who so constituted our moral nature, as to give the feeling of an exquisite charm, both in the possession of virtue and in the contemplation of it. Or when the theory of a moral sense offers itself to our regards, let us bear regard along with it to that God, who constructed this organ of the inner man,

and endowed it with all its perceptions and all its feelings. In the utility wherewith He hath followed up the various observations of moral rectitude; in the exquisite relish which He hath infused into the rectitude itself; in the law of conformity thereto which He hath written on the hearts of all men; in the aspect of eternal and unchangeable fitness, under which he hath made it manifest to every conscience—in these we behold the elements of many a controversy on the nature of virtue; but in these, when viewed aright, we also behold a glorious harmony of attestations to the nature of God. It is thus that the perplexities of the question, when virtue is looked to as but a thing of earthly residence, are all done away, when we carry the speculation upward to heaven. They find solution there; and cast a radiance over the character of Him who hath not only established in righteousness His throne, but, by means of a rich and varied adaptation, hath profusely shed over the universe that He hath formed, the graces by which He would adorn, and the beatitudes by which he would reward it.*

* It must be obvious that we cannot exhaust the subject, but only *exemplify* it, by means of a few specimens. There is an adaptation which, had it occurred in time, might have been stated in the text—suggested by the celebrated question respecting the liberty of the human will. We cannot but admit how much it would have deteriorated the constitution of humanity, or rather destroyed one of its noblest and most essential parts, had it been so constructed, as that either man was not accountable for his own actions, or that these actions were free in the sense contended for by one of the parties in the controversy—that is, were so many random contingencies which had no parentage in any events or influences that went before them, or occupied no place in a train of causation. Of the reasoners on the opposite sides of this sorely

24. Although the establishment of a moral theory is not now our proper concern, we may nevertheless take the opportunity of expressing our dissent from the system of those who would resolve virtue, not into any native or independent rightness of its own, but into the will of Him who has a right to all our services. Without disparagement to the Supreme Being, it is not His law which constitutes virtue; but, far higher homage both to Him and to His law, the law derives all its authority and its being from a virtue of anterior residence in the character of the Divinity. It is not by the authority of any law over Him, that truth and justice and goodness, and all the other perfections of supreme moral excellence, have, in His person, had their everlasting residence. He had a nature, before that He uttered it forth into a law. Previous to creation,

agitated question—the one contending for the moral liberty, and the other for the physical necessity of human actions—it is clear that there are many who hold the one to be destructive of the other. But what the wisdom of man cannot argumentatively harmonize in the world of speculation, the power and wisdom of God have executively harmonized in the world of realities—so that man, on the one hand, irresistibly feels himself to be an accountable creature; and yet, on the other, his doings are as much the subject of calculation and of a philosophy, as many of those classes of phenomena in the material world, which, fixed and certain in themselves, are only uncertain to us, not because of their contingency, but because of their complication. We are not sure if the evolutions of the will are more beyond the reach of prediction than the evolutions of the weather. It is this union of the moral character with the historical certainty of our volitions, which has proved so puzzling to many of our controversialists; but in proportion to the difficulty felt by us in the adjustment of these two elements, should be our admiration of that profound and exquisite skill which has mastered the apparent incongruity—so that while every voluntary action of man is, in point of reckoning, the subject of a moral, it is, in point of result, no less the subject of a physical law.

there existed in his mind, all those conceptions of the great and the graceful, which He hath embodied into a gorgeous universe; and of which every rude sublimity of the wilderness, or every fair and smiling landscape, gives such vivid representation. And in like manner, previous to all government, there existed in His mind those principles of righteousness, which afterwards, with the right of an absolute sovereign, He proclaimed into a law. Those virtues of which we now read on a tablet of jurisprudence were all transcribed and taken off from the previous tablet of the divine character. The law is but a reflection of this character. In the fashioning of law, He pictured forth Himself; and we, in the act of observing His law, are only conforming ourselves to His likeness. It is there that we are to look for the primeval seat of moral goodness. Or, in other words, virtue has an inherent character of her own—apart from law, and anterior to all jurisdiction.

25. Yet the right of God to command, and the rightness of His commandments, are distinct elements of thought, and should not be merged into one another. We should not lose sight of the individuality of each, nor identify these two things—because, instead of antagonists, they do in fact stand side by side, and act together in friendly co-operation. Because two influences are conjoined in agency, that is no reason why they should be confounded in thought. Their union does not constitute their unity—and though, in the conscience of man, there be an approbation of all rectitude, and all rectitude be an obligation laid

upon the conduct of man by the divine law—yet still the approbation of man's moral nature is one thing, and the obligation of God's authority is another.

26. That there is an approval of rectitude, apart from all legal sanctions and legal obligations, there is eternal and unchangeable demonstration in the character of God himself. He is under no law, and owns the authority of no superior. It is not by the force of sanctions, but by the force of sentiments that the Divinity is moved. Morality with Him is not of prescription, but of spontaneous principle alone; and He acts virtuously, not because He is bidden, but because virtue hath its inherent and eternal residence in His own nature. Instead of deriving morality from law, we should derive law, even the law of God, from the primeval morality of His own character; and so far from looking upwardly to His law as the fountain of morality, do we hold it to be the emanation from a higher fountain that is seated in the depths of His unchangeable essence, and is eternal as the nature of the Godhead.

27. The moral hath antecedency over the juridical. God acts righteously, not because of jurisdiction by another, but because of a primary and independent justice in Himself. It was not law which originated the moralities of the divine character; but these moralities are self-existent and eternal as is the being of the Godhead. The virtues had all their dwelling-place in the constitution of the Divinity—ere he stamped the impress of them on a tablet of jurisprudence. There was an inher-

ent, before there was a preceptive morality; and righteousness, and goodness, and truth, which all are imperative enactments of law, were all prior characteristics, in the underived and uncreated excellence of the Lawgiver.

BOOK V.

ON THE INSCRUTABILITY OF THE DIVINE COUNSELS AND WAYS; AND ON NATURAL THEOLOGY VIEWED AS AN IMPERFECT SYSTEM AND AS A PRECURSOR TO THE CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY.

CHAPTER I.

On Man's Partial and Limited Knowledge of Divine Things.

1. The true modern Philosophy never makes more characteristic exhibition of itself, than at the limit which separates the known from the unknown. It is there that we behold it in a two-fold aspect—that of utmost deference and respect for all the findings of experience within this limit; that, on the other hand, of utmost disinclination and distrust for all those fancies of ingenious or plausible speculation which have their place in the ideal region beyond it. To call in the aid of a language which far surpasses our own in expressive brevity, its office is "indagare" rather than "divinare." The products of this philosophy are copies and not creations. It may discover a system of nature, but not devise one. It proceeds first on the observation of individual facts—and if these facts are

ever harmonized into a system, this is only in the exercise of a more extended observation. In the work of systematizing, it makes no excursion beyond the territory of actual nature—for they are the actual phenomena of nature which form the first materials of this philosophy—and they are the actual resemblances of these phenomena that form as it were the cementing principle, to which the goodly fabrics of modern science owe all the solidity and all the endurance that belong to them. It is this chiefly which distinguishes the philosophy of the present day from that of by-gone ages. The one was mainly an excogitative; the other mainly a descriptive process—a description however extending to the likenesses as well as to the peculiarities of things; and, by means of these likenesses, these observed likenesses alone, often realizing a more glorious and magnificent harmony than was ever pictured forth by all the imaginations of all the theorists.

2. In the mental characteristics of this philosophy, the strength of a full-grown understanding is blended with the modesty of childhood. The ideal is sacrificed to the actual—and, however splendid or fondly cherished an hypothesis may be, yet if but one phenomenon in the real history of nature stand in the way, it is forthwith and conclusively abandoned. To some the renunciation may be as painful, as the cutting off of a right hand, or the plucking out of a right eye—yet, if true to the great principle of the Baconian school, it must be submitted to. With its hardy disciples one valid proof outweighs a thousand plausibilities—and the

resolute firmness wherewith they bid away the speculations of fancy, is only equalled by the child-like compliance wherewith they submit themselves to the lessons of experience.

3. It is thus that the same principle which guides to a just and a sound philosophy in all that lies within the circle of human discovery, leads also to a most unpresuming and unpronouncing modesty in reference to all that lies beyond it. And should some new light spring up on this exterior region, should the information of its before hidden mysteries break in upon us from some quarter that was before inaccessible, it will be at once perceived (on the supposition of its being a genuine and not an illusory light) that, of all other men, they are the followers of Bacon and Newton who should pay the most unqualified respect to all its revelations. In their case it comes upon minds which are without prejudice, because, on that very principle which is most characteristic of our modern science, upon minds without preoccupation. For example, the informations brought home by any instrument of clearer or larger vision have authority to rectify, or it may be to displace all our previous imaginations of the region whose mysteries are disclosed by it. But in the mind of a true Baconian there exist no such imaginations, or at least none which would not give way to the force of evidence, even the smallest that is assignable. The strength of his confidence in all the ascertained facts of the *terra cognita*, is at one or in perfect harmony with the humility of his diffidence in regard to all the conceived plausibilities of the *terra incognita*. In reference to

these last, his mind free of all innate and all antecedent conceptions, has been often compared to a sheet of blank paper. It is in a state of passiveness, or at most in a state of expectancy—ready to be graven upon by whatever characters may there be inscribed by the hand of a credible and competent informer. This habit of the understanding, of such value in all the sciences, is of inestimable value in theology. Compound in its application, but one and simple in the principle from which it emanates—this habit of decision in regard to all that is known, and of docility in regard to all that is unknown, would at once give steadfastness to our Philosophy and soundness to our Faith.

4. And let it further be remarked of the self-denial which is laid upon us by Bacon's philosophy, that, like all other self-denial in the cause of truth or virtue, it hath its reward. In giving ourselves up to its guidance, we have often to quit the fascinations of beautiful theory; but, in exchange for them, we are at length regaled by the higher and substantial beauties of actual nature. There is a stubbornness in facts before which the specious imagination is compelled to give way—and perhaps the mind never suffers more painful laceration, than, when after having vainly attempted to force nature into a compliance with her own splendid generalizations, she, on the appearance of some rebellious and impracticable phenomenon, has to practise a force upon herself—when she thus finds the goodly speculation superseded by the homely and unwelcome experience. It seemed at the outset a cruel sacrifice, when the world of specu-

lation with all its manageable and engaging simplicities had to be abandoned—and, on becoming the pupils of observation, we, amid the varieties of the actual world around us, felt as if bewildered if not lost among the perplexities of a chaos. This was the period of greatest sufferance; but it has had a glorious termination. In return for the assiduity wherewith the study of nature hath been prosecuted, she hath made a more abundant revelation of her charms. Order hath arisen out of confusion—and, in the ascertained structure of the universe, there are now found to be a state and a sublimity beyond all that was ever pictured by the mind in the days of her adventurous and unfettered imagination. Even viewed in the light of a noble and engaging spectacle for the fancy to dwell upon, who would ever think of comparing with the system of Newton, either that celestial machinery of Des Cartes which was impelled by whirlpools of ether, or that still more cumbrous planetarium of cycles and epicyles which was the progeny of a remoter age? It is thus that at the commencement of the observational process there is the abjuration of beauty. But it soon reappears in another form, and brightens as we advance, and at length there arises on solid foundation, a fairer and goodlier system than ever floated in airy romance before the eye of genius.*

* In the "Essays of John Sheppard,"—a work very recently published, and alike characterized by the depth of its christian intelligence and feeling, and the beauty of its thoughts—there occurs the following passage, founded on the manuscript notes taken by the author, of Playfair's Lectures. "It was impressively stated in a preliminary lecture by a late eminent Scottish

Nor is it difficult to perceive the reason of this. What we discover by observation is the product of the divine imagination bodied forth by creative power into a stable and enduring reality. What we devise by our own ingenuity is but the product of human imagination. The one is the solid archetype of those conceptions which are in the mind of God. The other is the shadowy representation of those conceptions which are in the mind of man. It is just as with the labourer, who, by excavating the rubbish which hides and besets some noble architecture, does more for the gratification of our taste, than if by his unpractised hand, he should attempt to regale us with plans and sketches of his own. And so the drudgery of experimental science, in exchange for that beauty whose fascinations it withstood at the outset of its career, has evolved a surpassing beauty from among the realities of truth and nature. The pain of the initial sacrifice is nobly compensated at the last. The views contemplated through the medium of observation are found not only to have a justness in them, but to have a grace and a grandeur in them, far beyond all the visions which are contemplated through the medium of fancy—or which ever regaled the fondest enthusiast in the enchanted walks of speculation and poetry. But neither the grace nor the gran-

Professor of Natural Philosophy, that the actual physical wonders of creation far transcend the boldest and most hyperbolical imaginings of poetic minds; 'that the reason of Newton and Galileo took a sublimer flight than the fancy of Milton and Ariosto.' That this is quite true I need only refer you to a few astronomical facts glanced at in subsequent pages of this volume in order to evince."—*Sheppard's Essays*, p. 69.

deur alone would without evidence have secured acceptance for any opinion. It must first be made to undergo, and without ceremony, the freest treatment from human eyes and human hands. It is at one time stretched on the rack of an experiment. At another it has to pass through fiery trial in the bottom of a crucible. At another it undergoes a long questionary process among the fumes and the filtrations and the intense heat of a laboratory—and not till it has been subjected to all this inquisitorial torture and survived it, is it preferred to a place in the temple of truth, or admitted among the laws and the lessons of a sound philosophy.

5. If there be one science to which the maxims of the Baconian Philosophy are more emphatically applicable than another, that science is Theology. For, not to speak at present of the Book of Revelation, let us but reflect how very small a portion of its contents in the book of Nature is accessible to man. As in the Christian Theology, we are charged against being wise above that which is written; so, in the Natural Theology, it behoves us not to be confident or vainly conjectural above that which is at all clearly or distinctly legible to human eyes. There seems enough in the system of visible things to impress the conviction of design in the formation of it—and so the conviction of a Designer, of a reigning mind that has the intelligence to devise and the power to execute its purposes. But how little a way does the light of experience carry us, in our attempts to divine what these purposes mainly and ultimately are.

We can discern many a specific aim in nature. There is no mistaking, for example, the intention of the Creator in the position of the teeth of animals; which have obviously been fixed where they are, instead of being protruded by a blind physical energy into useless excrescences on other parts of the body—with the express view of preparing the food for those ulterior processes which it undergoes, in the sustentation of an organic being. But though we see a specific meaning in this and a thousand other adaptations, there may yet be nothing which can lead us to comprehend the great and general meaning of the whole—what may be called the grand moving purpose of a creation, which so teems with innumerable births, and which plies its successive stages through the unvaried rounds of growth and decay and dissolution and revival. We distinctly enough see the use of those expedients by which one generation of living creatures is carried forwards from infancy to death, and leaves another generation behind it to perform the same cycle of functions and enjoyments during the course of its ephemeral being. We might discern the most unequivocal signatures of mind in that system of expedients by which one such rotation is accomplished; and yet to the eyes of nature there may be mystery; most hopeless unfathomable mystery as to the originating principle which prompted the establishment of these rotations, or as to the ultimate design in which they are to terminate. We may clearly see a thousand special contrivances for as many special accommodations—and yet there be altogether un-

known to us that grand comprehensive secret, which would explain what may be termed the policy of Creation. We are lost among the countless ingenuities of a Mechanism of which we form a part, and each of them giving palpable indication of the wisdom in which they originated. —But when we attempt, with no other resources than those of our own fancy, to guess at the drift of the whole mechanism, or to assign the mighty consummation for which its author did intend it— it is then that baffled in the enterprise, we feel the force of that remarkable expression—"the mystery of God."

6. In the science of Theology beyond all the other sciences, it is the part of man to quit all gratuitous speculations of his own; and limit himself to the findings of information and experience. It is there, if anywhere, that the excursive spirit of man is arrested by a strong impassable barrier between the known and the unknown. There are two obvious reasons for this—First, the narrow sphere of his own observations, when compared with the amplitude of Creation. Second, the ephemeral duration of his being, when compared with the eternity of the Creator. In either way he finds himself surrounded by a vast *terra incognita*, the depths and mysteries of a region to him inaccessible. His wisdom in these circumstances is not to fancy where he has not found, not to pronounce where he does not know—and, should any light break in upon him from this darkness, to submit to its guidance and be satisfied to learn. "It ought to be inculcated upon all men," says

De Luc, "that, next to the positive knowledge of things which may be known, the most important science is to know how to be ignorant. 'I don't know' ought to be a frequent answer of all teachers to their pupils, to accustom them to make the same answer without feeling ashamed." The following appears to us a golden maxim, and of inestimable price in what might be called the General Logic or Metaphysics of Theology. "To know that we cannot know certain things is in itself positive knowledge and a knowledge of the most safe and valuable nature; and to abide by that cautionary knowledge, is infinitely more conducive to our advancement in truth, than to exchange it for any quality of conjecture or speculation."* There are few services of greater value to the cause of knowledge, than the delineation of its boundaries. It saves all that fatigue and waste of effort which are incurred, by our stray excursions among the phantasmata of an unknown land. Above all, it puts out every false light by which the light of evidence might be overborne—and the labour of actual discovery is greatly lessened, when the search is narrowed by confinement within the limits of possible discovery. Man has learned much faster ever since Lord Bacon told him how little he could know—or, in other words, since, reclaimed from the territory of impracticable speculation, he has concentrated his efforts within that margin which skirts and terminates the whole field of attainable knowledge. This is a most valuable habit in all

* Granville Penn.

science. In the science of Theology it is inestimable.

7. And, to recur for a moment to the two great reasons why that humility which is so philosophical in all the departments of human inquiry is most peculiarly so in our own—the first being that the field of man's certainty is of such littleness in space, the second that it is of such littleness in time. Each in fact is but an infinitesimal, when compared, either with Immensity on the one hand, or with Eternity on the other. The enlargement of modern discovery has not abated the force of the first of these reasons, but has rather enhanced or given it greater meaning and emphasis than before. That telescope which has opened our way to suns and systems innumerable, leaves the moral administration connected with them in deepest secrecy. It has made known to us the bare existence of other worlds; but it would require another instrument of discovery, ere we could understand their relation to ourselves, as products of the same Almighty Hand, as parts or members of a family under the same Paternal Guardianship. This more extended survey of the Material Universe just tells us how little we know of the Moral or Spiritual Universe. It reveals nothing to us of the worlds that roll in space but the bare elements of Motion and Magnitude and Number—and so leaves us at a more hopeless distance from the secret of the Divine administration, than when we reasoned of the Earth as the Universe, of our species as the alone rational family of God that He had implicated with body, or placed in the midst of a corporeal system.

The politics of a family bear a larger proportion to that of an empire, than what in reference to the jurisprudence of God may be called the politics of a single world to that of the universe. Our discovery of the extent of Creation has just thrown a deeper obscurity over the counsels of the Creator. It has made the problem of His administration one of greater darkness and difficulty than before. In proportion to the vastness of His dominion, do we feel an inadequacy to comprehend the measures or the mysteries of His government. The question is now immeasurably widened, because complicated with other, and for aught we know innumerable relationships. We might have hoped to conquer or resolve the mystery of one isolated world—but not when involved in a scheme that is comprehensive of all worlds. We know but in part; and every new revelation which Astronomy has made of the amplitudes around us, just tells us more emphatically than before of the insignificance of that part, or the littleness of all we know in relation to the mighty whole. It conveys a most impressive rebuke on man's presumptuous imaginations; and should teach him, that, profoundly ignorant as he is of that high regime which embraces all and subordinates all, his true wisdom lies in giving up every gratuitous fancy of his own, and being the passive subject of the information that is offered to him.

8. It is of importance here to remark that the enlargement of our knowledge in all the natural sciences, so far from adding to our presumption, should only give a profounder sense of our natural incapacity and ignorance in reference to the

science of Theology. It is just as if in studying the policy of some earthly monarch we had made the before unknown discovery of other empires and distant territories which belonged to him, whereof we knew nothing but the existence and the name. This might complicate the study without making the object of it at all more comprehensible. And so of every new wonder which philosophy might lay open to the gaze of inquirers. It might give us a larger perspective of the creation than before, yet in fact, cast a deeper shade of obscurity over the counsels and ways of the Creator. We might at once obtain a deeper insight into the secrets of the workmanship—and yet feel, and legitimately feel, to be still more deeply out of reach, the secret purposes of Him who worketh all in all. Every discovery of an addition to the greatness of His works may bring with it an addition to the unsearchableness of His ways. This will explain how it is that with those philosophers who add soundness to talent, which by the way are very different things even as judgment and genius are different, every accession to their knowledge brings with it an accession, not to their pride, but to their modesty. Each discovery they make in the volume of His works, instead of clearing only serves to thicken as it were, the moral enigma of the Almighty's government—and so it leads them but to inquire all the more reverently at the volume of His word. This may let us somewhat into the secret of their unmoved or rather confirmed and established Christianity, in such men as Newton and Boyle—which stands forth in most

beautiful and effective contrast with the arrogant infidelity of later and lesser men. We may here perceive the difference between a first and a second-rate philosophy, and how thoroughly at one the soundest philosophy is with the soundest faith.

9. And an argument equally impressive, and to the same effect, may be founded on the consideration of man's littleness in time—even though carried beyond the limits of his own individual being, and upward to the confines of remotest history. All that we know is, at greatest, but a temporary evolution in the schemes and processes of that Divinity who is from everlasting. We can look but a short way, and through an obscure medium, to the duration that is past; and a still shorter way, through a still profounder obscurity, to the duration that is before us. And were it not tremendous presumption to sit in judgment on the counsels of Him, who unites in His wondrous Person and His wondrous plans both extremes of Eternity? We have access to but one or two intermediate links of a progression that is endless—nor can we pronounce either on the wisdom and efficacy of existing means, or on the nature of the consummation in which all is to terminate. Even in the transitions which are before our eyes, there is nothing which, apart from experience, can lead us to anticipate from the first germ or embryo of things what shall be the coming development; and can we therefore, from the ephemerical observation of a few fleeting ages, confidently reason on the winding up of the universal drama, or the full and final development of all things? We see a

beauteous expansion coming forth of the death-like Chrysalis; and a wide spread efflorescence of glory over the whole landscape issuing afresh from a soil which owes its fertility to loathsome putrefaction; and the sublimest virtues in the moral world nurtured into maturity and strength by dark misfortune or the still darker vices wherewith it is contiguous—and just as of old a goodly world is said to have emerged from a chaos, we know not among the births of this labouring creation, what beauty and blissfulness are afterwards to ensue from amid the warring elements which encompass us, and which look so inextricable. Man is but a learner among the mysteries which surround him; and his part is the docility of a learner. Whether we regard the littleness of his narrow sphere, or the littleness of his passing day—we see him closely hemmed on all sides by the limit which separates the known from the unknown. His true Philosophy is a sense of his own utter inability to penetrate the gloom that lies beyond it—and should the light of any manifestation arise in the midst of this darkness, its disclosures should be as much more precious in his eyes, as the stable realities of Truth and Nature are of surpassing worth to all self-willed or speculative imaginations.

10. And just as by thus keeping in the path of sober investigation, we have found a more graceful and magnificent Philosophy than we ever could have feigned—there is reason to hope that by a like sacrifice we shall arrive at a like result in Theology. Let us seek Truth first—and all other things shall be added unto us. What we

pioneer our way to through the toils of a thorny and laborious research, will have a beauty and a greatness that were never realized even in the most splendid conjectures of theory. In exchange for all those charms which we forego at the outset, and which would have lured us from the right walk, we shall at length reach a system of magnificence which man might discover, but which man could never have devised. The plastic and airy formations of his imaginative spirit will fall immeasurably short, even in the attributes of the sublime or the graceful, of that which bears upon it the actual impress of the Divinity—which is lighted by His all-comprehensive mind, or reveals to us, though in part, the counsels of an administration that extends to all worlds, and has its full and final development in the consummations of Eternity. So that were it but to recreate his fancy by beauteous and noble spectacles, he should, in Theology too, become an experimental inquirer. The labour of the spirit should go before—the luxury of the spirit will come afterwards. Let him first learn; and then let him luxuriate. It is the humble disciple whether in Theology or in Science who shall be exalted in due time. There may be no images of glory at the outset of this experimental path—but an imperishable glory shall be its rere-ward.

11. But the time for the most direct application of this principle is at our transition from the Natural to the Christian Theology; and when with but the humble and limited acquirements of the one, we enter on the larger manifestations of the

other. We trust it will then become palpable, that the same sound Philosophy which directs an entire and unqualified submission to the lessons of experience in studying the Volume of Nature, directs the like entireness of submission to the lessons of criticism in studying the Volume of Revelation; and that just as we should defer, though it be with the sacrifice of all our preconceptions, to the actual phenomena of Nature—so should we defer, though at the expense of as large a sacrifice, to the actual sayings of Scripture. We think it will then be easy to demonstrate the perfect identity of those mental habitudes in an inquirer—which lead in the one instance to a sound philosophy, and in the other instance to a sound faith—and that what experimental knowledge is in science, Biblical knowledge is in divinity. But meanwhile, and before we have finished our lucubrations on Natural Theism, we deem it right to have adverted thus far to a principle to the guidance of which we cannot betake ourselves too early; and the neglect of which in fact, has carried the Theology of Nature, or rather the academic Theology of our schools, greatly beyond the limits of truth and safety. In passing, as we do now, from the argument which respects the Being of a God, to the argument which respects His attributes and His ways, we cannot fail to notice a certain confidence of speculation, which in our opinion, transgresses and transgresses greatly—the limit between the known and the unknown. We hold it of the utmost importance that this Natural Theism should be set forth in its actual dimensions—there being

many, on the one hand, who ascribe to it a sufficiency and a strength, that would leave a Gospel uncalled for; and there being a few, upon the other, who regard it as little better than the baseless fabric of a vision. We think that it has a basement, and the fragments beside of a certain humble superstructure, marred, misshapen, and ruinous. But we also think that its disciples are greatly too aspiring—and that they have raised its pretensions far beyond the measure of its powers.

12. As a specimen of the rashness to which we now advert, let us instance one of the current maxims of this Theology—that it is the characteristic of Wisdom to accomplish its ends by the simplest of possible means. In the workmanship of God then, possessed as He is of the most perfect Wisdom, we should expect the greatest simplicity; and more especially the fewest possible causes, or that no more should be set in operation than were necessary or at least expedient for the production of a given effect. It is thus certainly that we form our estimate of human art; and should admire above all others the genius of the man who could simplify a machine by dispensing with some of its parts, while its powers remained in every way as effective as before. The greater the result in fact and the simpler the instrumental apparatus, the higher homage do we pay to the inventive faculties of its author—and we might therefore expect the most striking exemplifications of this combined simplicity and power, in the productions of that Supreme Artificer, who, beside the most consummate skill, has an infinity of resources at command.

Now, though in certain departments of Creation we are presented with noble specimens of this, yet, in far the greater number of instances, there seems what one might be led to regard as a useless complexity—not useless in reference to the actual constitution of things; but useless in reference to the powers of Him who ordained that constitution, and, might, had it so pleased Him, have, by means of another constitution and a far simpler economy, wrought out, we are apt to imagine, the great end or ends of His creation. We must admit of astronomy that it offers the finest examples of this alliance between simplicity and greatness—more especially in that beautiful planetarium which set a-going by one impulse, and animated by one simple force, contrasts so advantageously with the ethereal whirlpools, and the complicated cycles and epicycles of human imagination. We cannot afford to expatiate on the variety of great and good results that come forth of the one law of gravitation—else, beside the leading planetary movements, we might have noticed among other effects, the power of each planet to compel the attendance of secondaries—those lamps on the roof of night which afford so beauteous a supplement to the day's accommodation; and the power of those secondaries on the other hand, not to enlighten only but to produce wholesome agitation in the sea and atmosphere of planets, by means of tides in the air and tides in the ocean. Another splendid example of a mighty consequence emerging from a simple cause, is that the mere inclination of a line to a plane should give rise to the bene-

ficent round of the seasons, that goodly procession in the Heavens, at every footstep of which so many precious influences both in the way of delight and utility are shed upon our world. But, in descending from heaven to earth, we seem to lose sight of all this exquisite geometry—and, instead of one condition being the prolific germ of a thousand beneficial effects, we behold a thousand conditions indispensable to the production of one benefit. Take for example the organic structures, whether in the animal or vegetable physiology. What a complex system of means has been devised for the fulfilment of the end of their creation! When to the infinite wisdom we add the infinite power of God, we can have no doubt that He might, had it seemed to Him good, He might have grafted the feeling and the intelligence and the mental powers and the capacities of enjoyment which characterize a rational and accountable creature, on a simple elementary atom. But, instead of this, what a complex instrumentality that is which upholds the functions and faculties of a man—what a concurrence must there be of parts and of actions that he might be enabled to move and to think and to reason and to perform the rounds for which his Maker hath designed him! It seems a round-about way of arriving at the formation of this intelligent creature, that he should have to be provided with so complicated a framework for the evolution of his powers. One feels that the great purposes of his being might all have been secured with less expense as it were of contrivance and of operose workmanship. It looks as

if the great Artificer had fallen in with an impracticable subject; and had put forth His wisdom and power on the task of grafting upon this sluggish uncomplying matter, the life and the feeling and the intelligence which we now find, through the intervention of a most intricate mechanism, to be so curiously blended with it. This would represent the Deity as if in a state of necessity, and as if reduced to shifts or laborious expedients for the purpose of overcoming it—as if matter and its essential properties stood so far in the way of the divine purposes—an imagination not certainly in keeping with the doctrine, that He created this matter, and endued it with these properties. It is some such conception as this which may have led to the Theory of an Eternal Uncreated matter along with an Eternal Uncreated Mind—being an approximation towards the Manichean System of a Good and Evil Principle. Dr. Paley speaks somewhere in his Natural Theology of a problem having for its data the essential principles of matter, and for its object the production of life. It is announced in somewhat the usual form of, Given a substance having extent and divisibility and impenetrability and passiveness—to graft vitality thereupon. But still the marvel is that first God should by his own spontaneous choice, have originated into being such a mass and power of resistance to a desirable effect, and then had recourse to such manifold and multiform devices for the purpose of overcoming it. It seems like going out of the way, or like a very indirect and circuitous method of arriving at a result. There is a marvellous display

of skill and power in conquering the difficulty—but the surpassing marvel is that it should be a difficulty which Himself had created. The expectation that under a regime of Infinite wisdom, the greatest ends are brought about by the simplest of means, is to all appearance violated in the case of every physiological structure. And the confident maxim that such a simplicity best comports with the highest intelligence would therefore appear to land us in a reflection against the attributes of the Deity.

13. There is nothing however in this train of reflection, which can invalidate the argument for the existence of a God, possessed of inimitable skill and power, and who has put forth these attributes on the formation of the many exquisite structures which are before our eyes. All the efforts of human art cannot approximate even by the most distant imitation to the execution of such mechanism, as we see diversified into many thousands of distinct specimens both in the animal and vegetable kingdoms; and all of which attest by their manifold collocations, that they had been designed in the counsels, and formed by the fingers of an Artificer, whose thoughts are not as our thoughts and whose ways are not as our ways. It is a very profound enigma to us, why the actual matter of the world should require such peculiar treatment, ere it can be vivified either into an animal or vegetable. Yet there is an unquestionable good in such a constitution of things. It yields to us a resistless inference as to the Being of a God, however much it may darken the nature both of

His person and policy. If on the one hand to accomplish a given result by the fewest possible means be an indication of high wisdom, it is no less an indication of the same to accomplish it even though by a very cumbersome apparatus of means, if the workmanship had to be done on unlikely and unpromising materials. Still it remains a mystery why such should be the materials—and it is a mystery that we cannot unravel. The face of visible nature may be regarded as an impenetrable canvas, behind which its Author has withdrawn Himself from the view of mortals—yet not without imprinting such curious and high wrought embroidery upon it, as bespeaks a great force of intelligence and power within the vail. We can offer no absolute solution of the question why it is that He should so hide Himself, or why it is that the matter which Himself has created should require a treatment so very operose ere it can subserve His own purposes. On whichever side we turn, we feel ourselves treading on the confines of darkness. We may walk in light or in twilight, through what in the book of Job is called parts of His ways. But we soon come to a region of deepest secrecy—an impassable limit beyond which lie the depths and the mysteries that we cannot comprehend.

14. We have already said that the enlargement of astronomical discovery, while it expanded our conceptions of the divine greatness, had just the effect of making the divine counsels more incomprehensible than ever—and we now say that the complex adaptations, the number of contingencies

which must meet together for the accomplishment of a desirable end,—and on the absence or the failure of any one of which, the manifold adjustments both of place and of operation that enter into the products of physiology, and without any one of which neither an animal nor a vegetable could be sustained—these, while they give more intense demonstration to the reality of an intelligence that framed the whole of this exquisite mechanism, have the effect of casting over the designs and the processes of this intelligence a deeper mystery than before. They more clearly evince His Being, but they have the effect of making His policy more inscrutable—and while they tell more emphatically than a simpler material system would, that there is a God—they go to shroud the principle of His creation in profounder obscurity from our view, and to aggravate more hopelessly than ever the unsearchableness of His ways. It is thus that no conceivable extension of natural science would seem to supersede, but rather to enhance the necessity of revelation. None of her discoveries, however much they might afford more emphatic demonstration than we previously had of the Being and Intelligence of God, none of them can achieve, they do not even approximate, to the solution of the moral enigma involved in the question which relates to the principle or purpose of the divine administration.

15. We mean to say, that if, under the present economy, ten independent circumstances must meet together for the production of a certain beneficial effect instead of six, there is all the more

intense evidence thereby afforded, in the actual occurrence of such a combination, for the existence of God. But the very thing which gives a brighter revelation of His Being, only darkens the mystery of His conduct—and the question is still unresolved, why does the Almighty, who, we think, can accomplish all His purposes by the utterance of a word, why does He choose rather to effectuate them by methods so complex and circuitous? If it be alleged that it is just to evince more clearly, and more convincingly that He is,—another question remains, why this has not been accomplished by immediate vision—why that has been left to inference which might have been made the object of a direct and instant manifestation—or why the unseen God thus hides Himself beneath an impenetrable veil of materialism from the eye of His creatures? In short, we walk on a margin of incomprehensibles—and with all the light which we have for assuring us of His reality, there seems nought in nature which can help us to unravel the mystery of His counsels and His ways. And it is well we should know how soon it is that human reason gets beyond its soundings. The constant and aspiring tendency of man is to pass from the investigation of the *Quid* to the investigation of the *Quomodo.* It were well that we felt aright at what point the inquiry should cease—nor are we aware of aught more truly characteristic both of a sound Theologian and of a sound Philosopher than to discriminate between the region of accessible knowledge, and the ulterior region of the alike unknowable and unknown. Theology like every

other science has its competent and its incompetent questions. It were well that we at all times observed the difference between them—and made the distinction between those which we might legitimately entertain, and those to which our best possible answer is that we cannot tell.

16. It is not to excite a spirit of adventurous speculation, but to repress it, that we have noticed one of those difficulties which belong to Theism—though, it must be admitted, that, instead of laying the restlessness of human inquiry, they have often acted as a provocative to minds of aspiring curiosity. It is to make evident how short the way of safety and certainty is, along which an excursive spirit can proceed on this high subject—and that, amid the multitude of unresolved and unresolvable questions regarding the methods of the divine government, we should be satisfied in keeping within the limits of accessible knowledge, and exploring with all diligence the truth that one may reach, instead of idly straining at the truth which lies beyond it. At most like Sir Isaac Newton in philosophy, if we do enter upon the exterior region of mystery at all, we should proceed no further than to the margin—where, instead of propositions in the form of confident dicta, we should plant the confessions of our ignorance in the form of queries or in the form of humble unpretending desiderata. To a rightly constituted spirit the ulterior darkness, instead of operating as a stimulus, will operate as a sedative—that is, will quell the appetencies of the mind after that which is hopeless and unattainable; and so leave its energies entire for all useful, for all

discoverable truth. An unpresuming modesty of spirit in reference to the *terra incognita* of the human understanding, is perfectly at one with the utmost diligence and even daring of the spirit in thoroughly exploring the domain, and, if possible, extending the limits of the *terra cognita*. It was thus that in physics, he who was of all others the most fearful in pronouncing on the inaccessible mysteries beyond the veil, made the freest and most fearless inquisition within the field of accessible knowledge, and signalized himself the most of his species by the additions to science which he made thereupon. And as in physics, so ought it to be in Theology—the utmost reserve in all that is transcendental, the utmost research both into the world that is around, and into the world that is nigh to us—the busiest examination of all that is within the range of our faculties; but, along with this a quiescence of spirit in the light that we have, and at most a humble expectancy for more.*

* This mental habitude was beautifully exemplified by Robert Hall, and no less beautifully expounded in the description of it by his friend John Foster. The following are a few extracts from Foster's observations on Hall's character as a preacher :—

"Perhaps it would not have been expected from Mr. Hall's great capacity, that he should be habitually indisposed to dwell or expatiate long near the borders of the remoter, darker tracts of the regions of religious contemplation. Such, however, appears to have been the fact." "He was amply informed and warned, by his knowledge of the history of philosophy and theology, of the mischiefs of a restless, presumptuous, interminable speculation, a projection of thought, beyond the limits of ascertainable truth." "The speculative process lost its interest with him if carried into a direction, or if exceeding the limit, where it could no longer be subjected to the methods of proof; in other words, where it ceased to comprehend and reason, and turned into conjecture, sentiment, and fancy. He seemed to have no ambition to stretch

17. We cannot explain why under a God of infinite Power, complex means should be resorted

out his intellectual domain to an extent which he could not occupy and traverse, with some certainty of his movements and measurements. His sphere was very wide, expanded to one circle beyond another, at each of which in succession he left many other men behind him, arrested by their respective limits; but he was willing to perceive, and even desirous to verify, his own ultimate boundary; and when he came to the line where it was signified to him 'Thus far and no further,' he stopped, with apparently much less of an impulse than might have been expected in so strong a spirit, to seek an outlet, and attempt an irruption into the dubious territory beyond.

"With a mind so constituted and governed, he was less given than many other men of genius have been to those visionary modes of thought; those musings exempt from all regulation; that impatience of aspiration to reach the vast and remote; that fascination of the mysterious, captivating by the very circumstance of eluding; that fearful adventuring on the dark, the unknown, the awful; 'those thoughts that wander through eternity,' which have often been at once the luxury and the pain of imaginative and highly endowed spirits, discontented with their assigned lot in this tenebrious world. No doubt, in his case, piety would have interfered to restrain such impatience of curiosity, or audacity of ambitious thinking, or indignant strife against the confines of our present allotment, as would have risen to a spirit of insubordination to the divine appointment. And possibly there were times when this interference was required; but still the structure of his faculties, and the manner of employing them to which it determined him contributed much to exempt him from that passion to go beyond the mortal sphere which would irreligiously murmur at the limitation. His acquiescence did not seem at least to cost him a strong effort of repression.

"This distinction of his intellectual character was obvious in his preaching. He was eminently successful on subjects of an elevated order, which he would expand and illustrate in a manner which sustained them to the high level of their dignity. This carried him near some point on the border of that awful darkness which encompasses, on all sides, our little glimmering field of knowledge; and then it might be seen how aware he was of its approach, how cautiously, or shall I say instinctively, he was held aloof, how sure not to abandon the ground of evidence, by a hazardous incursion of conjecture or imagination into the unknown. He would indicate how near, and in what direction lay the shaded frontier; but dared not, did not seem even tempted, to invade 'its majesty of darkness.'"

to for the attainment of a desirable end—and neither can we explain why a lengthened process in time should be necessary for the same attainment. He could, we might imagine, will the greatest possible good into instant accomplishment. Yet He does not. Even within our own little territory of observation, we can notice the progression of years ere things come to their state of greatest perfection; and, for aught we know, it might require the mighty progression of centuries, or of still loftier and more extended cycles, ere many of the existing and current plans in the Universe shall reach their full consummation. Every thing seems to be done by progressions. The full-grown tree is not made to arise in the complete garniture of its fruit or foliage by an instant act of Creation—but, ere it reaches its present strength and altitude, has to weather a series of exposures and to undergo a very gradual process of nourishment and accretion. The man of full-grown faculties does not start into immediate being at the bidding of a voice—but reaches the maximum of his usefulness and vigour, through the delays and difficulties and dangers of a tedious passage from the outset of his existence, and by many successive stages. Not to speak of the collective progress that is made by mankind from one age to another along the great steps of a world's history, the species are not prepared for the joys and exercises of a complete society in Heaven, but by the birth and the transit and the successive disappearance of many generations. With all the resources of Omnipotence, and a goodness so entire and unlimited that He has been designed a God of

love—He might have willed, we fondly imagine, He might have willed instanter into being a full and finished Paradise, where each rejoicing inhabitant, with a beatitude up to the measure of his capacity, might have expatiated from the first moment of his existence in happiness without a flaw, and that was to last for ever. But this too is reached by a progression of unknown length and magnitude; and meanwhile we live among the imperfections of an embryo state, the struggles and the sighs and we may add the sinfulness of a creation that seems labouring in birth, and as if charged with the pains and the portents of a coming regeneration. Now we should be satisfied to know this as a fact or phenomenon, although we should not know the principle of the phenomenon. It is a great matter, when unable to ascertain *how* it is, to be satisfied with the assurance that *so* it is. The end is more valuable than its means, and one might think that the creative Power might have ordained the end without the stepping-stone of means. But it is not so ordered—for neither has it dispensed with a complex and extended instrumentality in space—nor with a lengthened procedure in time. The life of man is more valuable than the lungs, or the heart, or any other organ which has functions to perform that under our present constitution are indispensable to vitality—And God could, we imagine, have willed this life into direct action and enjoyment, without the intervention of such an elaborate materialism. And in like manner, for there is an identity of principle in the two cases, the mature virtue and unsullied felicity of heaven

are more valuable than the toils and sufferings of an earthly pilgrimage—and God, armed as He is with a force of execution which no obstacle can withstand, and a benevolence ample and unconfined as the wide possibility of things, might have willed the consummate happiness at once without the tardy preparation. Now, in defect of all our endeavours to comprehend the rationale, we should acquiesce like true disciples of the philosophy of observation in the facts—that, instead of being subtilized among the transcendental difficulties of the subject into an airy speculative Theology, we might stop at that limit beyond which if we transgress, we will leave all that is sure and sound in Theology behind us. In short, it should be studied not by the method of synthesis but by the method of analysis—not by going downward in the science, with our point of departure *a priori*, or from its assumed principles; but by going upward in the science, with our point of departure *a posteriori*, or from its observed phenomena—in this way treasuring up the ascertained facts, nor holding them less valuable because of the unascertained reasons which lie behind them—satisfied with that light of evidence which informs us of the what, however dim may be that light of theory which informs us of the why—Let this be our habit, and we shall then learn to wait and to postpone our curiosity, in a multitude of questions to which our best and surest answer is that we cannot tell.

18. Ere we enter on our brief exposition of the Attributes of God as viewed in the light of Natural

Theology—let us, in the spirit we are now recommending, propose a few considerations on the subject of certain difficulties which regard His character and ways. The object, we repeat, is not to encourage temerity of speculation but to repress it—that, abstaining from matters too high for us, we may keep on that humbler track where there is both a steady light and a firm pathway.

19. The difficulties to which we refer stand all related to the imagination, that where there is a Creator of infinite power united with infinite goodness, there should be a creation of instant and universal blessedness. Now they are the exceptions to this which have ministered so much perplexity to the speculatists in theological science. They seem to impair the omnipotence or the benevolence of God; and it is in the attempt to reconcile existing appearances with the one or other of these attributes, that so many an adventurous flight has been taken into the region of transcendentals. Now, without any attempt at a positive reconciliation, we think that we can adduce so much as should lead us to keep the whole question in abeyance. Without offering to throw light upon the question, we shall do enough if we simply neutralize it. There is many a conceivable topic of human thought regarding which there is an utter want of evidence either on the one side or on the other—in which case if it do not help, neither should it hinder our conviction upon other topics that are shone upon by evidence, and which lie accessible to human inquiry. A thing may be far removed from us in ulterior darkness, like a

body in the Heavens beyond the range of our telescopes. In virtue of its situation we can attain to no positive knowledge of it. But it ought to be well remembered too, that, in virtue of this very situation, it stands disarmed of all power to disturb our conclusions respecting the things which are near us and within the confines of observation. The imagination of things beyond the telescope, can surely have no effect on the views or informations of other things which are given us by the telescope. And the same is true of many, of very many topics in Theology. They lie ulterior to our range—not merely beyond the outskirts of Natural Theology, a domain which may be said to comprehend all that can be seen by the naked eye of the mind—but also beyond the outskirts of the Christian Theology, that wider and larger domain, which has been opened up to our view by the mental or spiritual telescope of revelation. To attempt the comprehension of such a topic by the former light, were to enter on a task above the powers of nature. To attempt the comprehension of it by the latter light, were to attempt being wise above that which is written. But the very reconditeness which precludes a transcendental topic from being ever turned into an affirmative doctrine, also nullifies it as a disturbing force by which to weaken or to change our belief in other doctrines. This principle, if rightly applied, would prove a safeguard against many of the delusions of sophistry and scepticism. There may be a vast, an interminable number of questions, started in Theology, of such an unresolvable character that all the friends

of religion cannot make out of them an argument for any positive article in the creed—but neither, on the other hand, can the enemies of Religion make out of them an argument, by which to displace or in any way to deduct from the strength and authority, of a single article that is there. We should count it enough if the origin of evil were reduced to this description of questions. We offer no positive solution of the problem. We should be satisfied, if it were simply put *hors de combat* —and if abiding unresolved for ever in this world, it left us but at liberty to appropriate the truth within our reach, and to walk in the light of the actual evidence that is around us.

20. Now for this purpose it is not needed that we should solve the question. It is enough that, in the mean time, we should suspend it or put it to sleep—and the most effectual method, we hold, of doing so, were to show cause—why, with our present degree of light, it should yet be regarded as altogether a question too high for us.

21. There is nothing which more inclines ourselves to leave it upon such a footing, than the unwarrantable presumption both of the religionists and the irreligionists upon this question. When combatants are found to draw alike the matter of their speculation from a region of unfathomable mystery beyond them, there may be any thing but light thrown upon their controversy—but still there is a great deal made out, if it can be shown that there are assumptions of equal hazard and uncertainty on both sides. In this way, they countervail each other—and their best wisdom

were a mutual retirement from the field, and with this principle, that a controversy which cannot be settled should just be let alone.

22. We hold it greatly better, on the one hand, for the religionists to attempt no positive or confident solution of the problem—and, on the other hand, there are three distinct considerations which might tend, we think, to nullify the argument by which the irreligionists have attempted through the means of this difficulty to subserve the cause of scepticism.

23. The first is, that when they assume the omnipotence of God as a reason for expecting no evil in the Universe—seeing that God could have caused it to be otherwise if He would—they assume a principle which must be received with certain qualifications. It is no aspersion of His dignity but the opposite, when we affirm that there are certain things which God cannot do. We read in a Book the authority of which we trust afterwards to demonstrate, that He cannot lie. This is one limit to the universality of their assertion, though no limit but the contrary and on the perfections of God. 'It is not a physical but a moral necessity which makes His utterance of a falsehood impossible. It is not because He has not strength for the utterance; but it is the very strength of His character which restrains it, and puts it forth as it were beyond the domain of possible things. It is not because He is short of omnipotence that He cannot lie—for there is the force of omnipotence in His recoil from such a violence to his moral nature. He cannot because He will not—

and if this be called impotency, it is an impotency which exalts the Deity, and thrones Him in character of more awful reverence.

24. But secondly, it is doing violence to the right or philosophical order of our conceptions—it is not viewing matters according to their actual precedency, when the Divine Will is regarded as the first source of all things. God did not will Himself into existence—and neither did He will the character or constitution of the Godhead. We almost feel an oppression upon our spirit when we thus lift our regards to the primeval fountain-head of Being. Yet it is surely more logical to say that He wills according to His nature, than that He willed His nature. In other words His nature is a higher fountain-head than His will. And is it for us to prove the secrecies of this underived, this uncreated nature—or to say whether there are not deep laid necessities there, under which, a God, even of boundless perfection, may have seen reason to command into being such a Universe as ours? Can we scale those mysterious altitudes along which we are conducted to the First Origin of Things; and thence foretell the direction or quality of the streams which should issue from these lofty recesses of the Eternity that is past, and are to have their final consummation in the Eternity that is before us?

25. But thirdly, there has much been said by certain of our speculatists in Theism on certain powers or virtues which are incommunicable—and which cannot therefore, in the nature of things, be realized upon any creature. We have no great

taste, we must confess, for this style of speculation at all. But as a specimen, let us mention a few of the things which are represented as being necessarily beyond the exercise of the Creative Power. God cannot, it is said, realize upon any substantive being, aught that involves in it either a logical or a mathematical contradiction. He could not, for example, make a thing to be and not to be at the same time—or he could not make a circle whose circumference shall be precisely three times its diameter. And so along with this it is imagined, that there might be certain physical necessities, which even the Force of Omnipotence, restricted as it is within the domain of possibility, cannot violate. It seems clear enough that He cannot give certain of His own attributes to the creature, as His Eternity, His Self-existence, His Independence—and hence do our Theorists proceed to the assertion that He cannot impart certain other of His perfections—not His Ubiquity, not His Omniscience, not his Infinity of moral perfection, and so not His impossibility of sinning. We feel inclined to proceed no further with these desperate fetches into the arcana of a matter that is inscrutable—these guesses into the mystery of things. But we would put the question, if we really know as much of a creative process, and of the laws and the limitations by which it must be regulated, as to warrant the affirmation that the existence of evil is at variance with the existence of a Being possessing all moral and all natural perfection—and whether is it safer to incur the risk of tremendous presumption in meddling with this high spe-

culation—or, walking in the light we have, to wait the disclosures of that day which has been emphatically called the "Day of the Manifestation of God?"*

26. In opposition then to that unqualified imagination of the Omnipotence of God, which would lead some to suspect that there should be no deficiency from perfect blessedness, and far more that there should be no positive suffering in creation, let us plead the ignorance of man. The *argumentum ab ignorantia*, when rightly applied, is a preservative from an infinity of errors in all the branches of human speculation. There is a little clause very often employed by Butler in his reasonings—and, when opportunely brought in, it is of inestimable value, both in Theology and in Science—"for aught we know." For aught we know, there may be expediencies, or, if you will, necessities which require both a complicated system of means and a lengthened procedure, ere the best and worthiest consummation of all things is arrived at. For aught we know, suffering, and even sin, may be the stepping-stones to a greater and nobler result than could have been otherwise accomplished. It is on this ground that we would adjourn the question of the origin of evil. We would attempt no positive solution of it. We cannot sympathize with Leibnitz and others in the confident deliverance which they have made upon the subject—yet, if viewed not as a peremp-

* There are some striking views on the Divine Omnipotence in a recent Volume of Essays and Sermons by the Rev. Henry Woodward of Ireland—a work replete with originality, and rich in the germs of high thought.

tory solution but as a likely or even as a doubtful Hypothesis, it may, though in this humbler capacity, be of service to the cause. It is enough for this purpose that it have sufficient plausibility to warrant, not the certainty that it is, but at least the conjecture that it may be true. If we can but say of the Optimism of Leibnitz that for aught we know it may be true, this would at least neutralize the origin of evil as a topic of objection—and, though it may not satisfy the Infidel, a great practical good is effected by it, should it put him to silence.

CHAPTER II.

On the Use of Hypotheses in Theology.

LEIBNITZ'S THEORY OF THE ORIGIN OF EVIL.

1. LEIBNITZ is rightly held to be the most philosophical defender of Christianity, in its more peculiar and evangelic form. We should not say that he is the most effective defender of it—an honour which we should rather ascribe to Jonathan Edwards. There was however more of science and expansion in the former; and something to us inexpressibly pleasing, in the union of his orthodoxy with the academic spirit and phraseology of a man, who stood among the very highest of his day in the great literary republic, and even shared with Sir Isaac Newton in the glory of his immortal disco-

veries. He has a vast deal more of eloquence and sentiment and generalization than Edwards; but he is more of an adventurous speculatist, and therefore not so safe to be trusted, and more especially when he proposes as *a positive dictum* what at best is an Hypothesis. But an Hypothesis might subserve a great logical purpose in Theology. And accordingly the one framed by Leibnitz respecting the Origin of Evil, even though admitted to no higher rank than a mere unsupported imagination, may yet be of force to nullify all the objections wherewith this topic is conceived to be pregnant, and so as to leave in their undiminished strength all those affirmative proofs on which the system of Theology is based.

2. It may be right to state the leading conceptions which enter into Leibnitz's theory. He is an optimist, and conceives the actual universe to be such as it is—because of all possible systems it works off the greatest amount of good. He imagines God to be not the author of evil as evil. Evil is not the terminating object of his Creation. That object was the production of the maximum of good—And evil has place in the existing economy of things—only because subservient to the perfectly benevolent and holy end which God had in view, and of which end alone he can be properly called the author.

3. He supposes all the possible forms of a universe to have been present to the Divine Mind from eternity. There must be an infinity of such forms, yet all of them must have been present to the infinite understanding of God. Only one of them

has been realized, or embodied into an actual production by an exercise of the creative power. Of this one, God only is the author. He willed the actual universe into existence—but He did not will the other forms of universes into possibility. They were the objects of his understanding from all eternity, just as number and figure were—and He is no more the author of these than He is the author of His own understanding. He is the author only of that one universe which He selected out of all the possible varieties—and for this reason, that, by the production of it rather than any other, he gave being to the maximum of good. It may so be, that, of all the possible forms, that which yields the greatest amount of good envelopes in it a certain amount of evil. It was not for the evil but for the good that the universe was called out of the region of possibles into the state of a reality —and God in selecting it notwithstanding the evil did that which was wisest and best.

4. The following extract of a few sentences from his essay on the goodness of God, the liberty of man, and the origin of evil, may perhaps make this part of his system intelligible. "Evil comes rather from the abstract forms themselves, that is to say from ideas which God has not produced by an act of His will, any more than numbers and figures, and any more, in short, than all possible essences, which should be reckoned eternal and necessary—for they are found in the ideal region of the possibles—that is to say in the Divine understanding. God then is not the author of the essences so long as they are but possibilities—but

there is nothing actual which He has not decreed and given existence to: and He has permitted evil, because it is enveloped in the best plan which is found in the region of possibles, and that, divine wisdom could not fail to have chosen."—*Essay*, Art. 338.

5. Now it were a hardy thing in a creature of such bounded observation and faculties as man to deny, that, for aught he knows, this may be. We do not want to dogmatize any one into the theory of Leibnitz; and we think he advances it with a degree of positive confidence in its truth, wherewith we cannot sympathize. We must regard it as an unproved, but still we hold it as available for a precious service in theology, if it be not a disproved hypothesis. We think that Leibnitz has undertaken more than man is able for, in undertaking the burden of its proof; but we also think, that the antagonist of Leibnitz would undertake more than man is able for, were he to undertake the burden of its disproof. For the accomplishment either of the one or of the other, we must have a power of discovery remounting to the first origin of things in the eternity that is behind, and reaching to their final consummation in the eternity before us. In these circumstances, all we can say of the optimism of Leibnitz is that we do not know. But this is tantamount to saying, that we do not know the evil in the universe to be inconsistent with the goodness and absolute perfection of its author. Hypothesis as it is, it establishes no positive addition to the truths of religion—yet hypothesis though it be, it is all-triumphant in disarming those objec-

tions to religion which infidelity has fetched from this quarter of contemplation; and whereby it would charge the sin and the misery which abound in Nature, on the non-existence of Nature's God.

6. At the conclusion of his Essay there is a very fine and felicitous illustration of the system, strongly characteristic of Leibnitz, and exhibiting all the force and comprehension of his genius, replete with the phraseology, as well as the conceptions of lofty science. It is given in the form of a dialogue, in the progress of which the inquirer is at length referred to the goddess Minerva, for the solution of those doubts and mysteries by which his spirit had been agitated. The puzzle was, how to reconcile with the wisdom and goodness of Jupiter, the appearance of such a monster in our world as Sextus Tarquinius the last of the Roman kings. He is introduced into a palace where he is presented with the pictures or rather admitted to a perusal of the history of all possible worlds—had these worlds been realized. He had previously been reasoned into the conviction, that Tarquin was justly chargeable with the guilt of his own wickedness—notwithstanding the fore-knowledge of Apollo, and the absolute pre-ordination of Jupiter and the Fates. And the object of the remaining argument, is to reconcile the existence of such enormous iniquities with the actual optimism of that world, in which these iniquities had been perpetrated. At this point of the dialogue, Tarquin is conceived not yet to have entered on his guilty career, but to have consulted the oracle as to his future destiny; and to have been forewarned,

that, if he went back to Rome, he should be preferred to its sovereignty and, along with this, precipitated into the most odious and disgraceful crimes—whereas if he renounced Rome, the fates would weave for him other destinies, and he become wise and happy. The actual Tarquin resisted not the temptation of a crown—but there were other ideal worlds, each having a Tarquin, with the same history up to the period of consulting the oracle and a different history subsequent to that period. And the design is to show that the actual world is the best, notwithstanding the disfiguration which it suffered from the atrocities of the actual Tarquin. "You have learned geometry in your youth," said Minerva to Theodore, "like all other well educated Greeks. You know then, that, when the conditions of a required point are not enough to determine it—this gives rise to an infinity of points, all of which fall into what the geometers term a locus; and this locus at least which is often a line will be determinate. It is thus that you might figure a regular series of worlds all of them enveloping the case in question, but with circumstances and effects which vary in each different world. But if you suppose a world which differs from the actual one, only in one definite thing and its consequences, there is a certain determinate world that will answer the supposition. These worlds are all here, at least in ideal representation. I will show you some where you shall find not quite the same Sextus that you have seen, (that is impossible, for he always carries with him that which is to make him what he should

be) but approximate Sextuses, who should have all that you already know of the true Sextus, though not all which is already in him that you do not perceive, nor of course all that shall afterwards happen to him. You will find in one world a very happy and exalted Sextus, in another a Sextus contented with a moderate fortune—Sextuses in short, of every species, and in an infinity of fashions.

"Upon this the goddess conducted Theodore into one of the apartments. When there it was no longer an apartment but a world—'Solemque suum, sua sidera norat.' By the order of Pallas Dodona, the place of the oracle was made to appear with the temple of Jupiter, and Sextus coming forth of it professing that he would obey the god. He went thence to a city like Corinth placed between two seas. He there bought a garden; in cultivating it he found a treasure, became rich, was loved and respected, and at length died at a great age the idol of the whole city. Theodore saw his whole life, as if with the glance of an eye, and in theatrical representation. There was a volume of writings in this apartment. Theodore could not refrain from asking the contents of it. It is the history, replied the goddess, of the world that we are now visiting. It is the book of its destinies. You have seen a number on the forehead of Sextus. Search in that book for the place which is marked by it. Theodore searched, and found the history of Sextus in greater fulness than he had seen it in the panorama. Put your finger on whatever line you please said Pallas; and you shall

see represented effectually in all its detail what this line but describes in the gross. He obeyed, and there were made to appear all the particulars in that portion of the life of Sextus. They then passed into another apartment; and there saw another world, another book, another Sextus—who, coming out of the apartment and resolved to obey Jupiter, went into Thrace. He there espoused the daughter of the king his only child, and succeeded him. He is adored by his subjects. They went into other chambers and always saw new scenes.

"The apartments were so ranged as to form a pyramid. They became always finer towards the summit, and represented finer worlds. They came at last to the highest which terminated the pyramid, and was the finest of all—for the pyramid had a commencement, but no end. It had a summit, but not a base—for it went downward to infinity. This was (as the goddess explained it) because in an infinity of worlds there is one the best of all—otherwise God would not have been determined to create any of them—and there is none below it which is not less perfect. Therefore it descends to infinity. Theodore on entering this highest apartment was thrown into ecstasy—he required succour from the goddess. A drop of divine liquor on his tongue restored him. He was transported with joy. We are now in the true and actual world (said the goddess) and you are at the acmé of happiness. See what Jupiter has prepared for you, if you continue faithful in his service. Behold Sextus such as he is, and such as he actually shall

be. He sallies forth of the temple in a rage, despising the counsel of the gods. He goes to Rome, there puts all into disorder, violates the wife of his friend. See him banished with his father, beaten, miserable. Had Jupiter put in at this place, a happy Sextus at Corinth, or a king in Thrace, it would no longer have been this world. And meanwhile, he could not but have chosen this world which surpasses in perfection all the rest, and forms the apex of the pyramid—else Jupiter would have renounced his wisdom, banished me, me who am his daughter. You see that my father has not made Sextus wicked—he was so from all eternity—and he was always so freely. He has done nothing but award him existence, what his wisdom could not refuse to that world in which he was comprehended. He has made him pass from the region of the possible to that of the actual being. The crimes of Sextus subserves great events. It makes Rome free—there springs from it a great empire which will give great examples. But that is nothing to the total value of the world, of which you will admire the perfection, when, after a happy passage from this mortal state to a better, the gods should have rendered you capable of knowing it."—*Essay*, Art. 414—417.

7. Leibnitz and others seem to think that they have effected a positive reconciliation. We are satisfied with their attempt, though we think that they have effected no more than a hypothetical reconciliation of the existence of evil with the system of optimism, or with the perfection of the character of God According to his view, God

is not properly the author of evil, any more than He is the author either of his own understanding, or of the necessary and eternal and immutable truths which have residence there and are for ever present to its contemplation. He did not will the properties of figure, or the relations of quantity and number—and in like manner, is it conceived, that He did not will that countless infinity of objects which have no other being than in the region of possibilities. In this region there exist in idea all possible universes; and, by an act of voluntary and creative power, it is affirmed that God made to exist in reality that one universe which is the best. There is evil, it is further imagined, essentially implicated even in this best form of a universe —but should this, for the sake of a fancied improvement, be done away or converted into an opposite good—it would throw us back to some other of the possible forms, some different economy under which less of good on the whole would be produced than in the actual system of things. This evidently supposes that, in addition to the logical and the mathematical and the moral necessities which it is impossible for God to annul, there are also physical necessities which it is alike impossible for Him to annul. He could not by this hypothesis expunge the evil that is in our actual universe, but at the expense of a short-coming from the maximum of good that is rendered by it. We cannot positively affirm this to be true—but we can at least say that, for aught we know, it may be true. If we cannot assert, neither can we by any reason or by any knowledge of ours overturn it. It seems to be one

of those doctrines which lie equally beyond the reach of confident asseveration or confident denial. We cannot refute the dogma of certain uncontrollable necessities, in virtue of which, if one event shall occur, a less good on the whole must ensue, or a maximum of good be rendered impossible. But if so, neither can we refute the optimism of Leibnitz.

8. It will be perceived how it is, that the optimists may avail themselves of this theory, to soften all that is hard or obnoxious in those doctrines which seem to charge upon God that He is the author of evil. He did not will the infinite possible forms of universe into their state of possibility, any more than He willed the properties of figure or quantity into their state of trueness. He only willed one of these forms into its state of actual existence—and He did it on the principle of its being that form of an economy for a universe, under which the greatest good could be rendered upon the whole. It was only in that creative exercise by which He called our present universe, from the possible to the actual, that there was a forthgoing of will on the part of God—and He is not the author of the possible which exists only in idea, but the author only of the actual which He has made to exist in real and positive Being. Now it is of prime importance to remark for the vindication of character, that, in choosing the best possible form of a universe, the evil enveloped in that form was not the thing chosen. The thing chosen was the maximum of good—the *summum bonum* of a creation, which, of all possible creations, was the best. This directs us to an object wholly distinct,

nay, opposite, to the evil that is in Nature, as the proper and terminating object on which the will of the Almighty laid hold in the act of creation. Had He created our universe because of the evil that is in it, this would have fastened one character on the Maker of all things. But if He have created our universe because, in spite of the evil that is in it, it is the best of all the possible varieties that were in the view of His infinite understanding, this attaches to Him another and a contrary character. He is to be estimated, not by the evil that belongs to our universe, but by the maximum of good that belongs to it. The evil, in fact, may properly be said not to have sprung from His will at all. It exists actually only because it existed possibly—and it was translated from the state of possible to that of actual, not for its sake, but for the sake only of that *summum bonum* wherewith it lay implicated in the best possible form of a universe. At this rate the evil, we should observe, may be viewed as not chargeable on God at all—but properly on the form which He translated from the possible to the actual, in the exercise of greatest goodness because for the production of the greatest good. On the strength of this remark we may perhaps understand Leibnitz when he makes Minerva say that "my father has not made Sextus wicked, he was so from all eternity. He has done nothing but award him existence, which His wisdom could not refuse to that world in which he was comprehended." He elsewhere makes a distinction between the permissive and the productive will of God. The object of the productive in this

instance is the maximum of good. The permissive has a reference to the evil. It is by the productive and not the permissive that the character of God is to be estimated. "And the proper object of the permissive will is not that which is permitted, but the permission itself"—a permission, not for the sake of the evil but for the sake of its accompanying good. "Et permissivæ voluntatis objectum proprium non id est quod permittitur sed permissio ipsa."—*Leibnitz, Causa Dei asserta*, &c., Art. 28.

9. Now all this is distinctly applicable to the vindication of the common theological system. The doctrine of that entire and universal sovereignty which is ascribed to God, would seem to make him more expressly chargeable with the evil both moral and physical which abounds in the universe. But ere this can be sustained as conclusive, our antagonists must prove that this evil is not essentially implicated in a universe of the best possible form. We do not affirm this as a truth. But we state it as a probability that, even in this humble and unpretending capacity, is altogether of force enough to silence the objection, and so leave theology to its own proper evidence. But there is another conception involved in the theory of Leibnitz, which we consider as still more fitted to do away all that is harsh or revolting from the aspect of our theological creed. We do not need, any more than in the former case, to vouch in positive terms for the opinion. Enough, as we have already said, that it is beyond the reach of any positive refutation. In which case, it will accomplish the only service that we require at its

hand—even that, not of supplying a dogma of its own, but of setting a difficulty which attaches to another dogma at rest.

10. This conception has its source in a fancy or invention of the schoolmen; and which has at least a very striking, if not altogether satisfying illustration, to recommend it. What we allude to is the privative character of evil—in as much as the formal cause of it, is conceived to have no efficiency. Evil is supposed by them to consist in privation—and hence the schoolmen call the cause of evil "deficiente." Hence the quarter to which we should look for the origin of evil is the essential defect of the creature—arising from the necessary limitation to which, as creatures, all of them are subject. In short it is in morals what cold is in physics—a thing of negative quality altogether—that is, as cold, instead of being a positive agent of opposite properties to heat, is regarded as the absence or the negation of heat—so sin is regarded as but the negation of virtue or righteousness. "Every thing," says Leibnitz, "that is purely positive or absolute is a perfection, and every imperfection proceeds from limitation, that is to say is of a privative character." At this rate God is regarded as the cause of all the perfections—and limitations or privations as resulting from an original imperfection in creatures, which bounds what is termed their receptivity. This is finely illustrated by the *vis inertiæ* in matter, and its effects on a loaded vessel, which the river causes to go with more or less slowness, in proportion to the weight that it carries. Its velocity, comes from the river;

but the retardation, which bounds this velocity, comes from the cargo. And thus too it is imaged of the creature that it is the cause of sin, though but a deficient cause; and that its errors and wicked inclinations spring from privation. This agrees with the sentiment of Augustine that God hardens, not by giving what is positively evil to the soul—but because the effect of His good impression is limited by the resistance of the soul, and by the circumstances which contribute to that resistance—so that He does not give it all the good which could surmount its evil. "Nec (he says) ab illo erogatur aliquid quo homo fit deterior, sed tantum quo fit melior non erogatur." But had God wished to do more, he behoved either to make creatures of another nature, or to work miracles for changing their nature—neither of which the actual plan of things as being the best, admitted of. This would just be requiring that the current of a river should be made more rapid than its declivity admitted of, or that the vessels should be less laden that they might go forward with the greater velocity. The limitation, or the original imperfection of creatures causes that even the best plan of a universe is not exempted from certain evils; but which will subserve a greater good. There are certain disorders in the parts, which bring out into striking relief the beauty of the whole—even as certain dissonances in music when put in rightly render the harmony more exquisite.

11. We may now at least apprehend the theory of Leibnitz. We do not say that we ought to be convinced by it. There is a great accordance

between it, and the sentiments of Augustine and others of the ancient fathers. It is impossible not to be reminded, too, of these verses in St. James—"Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God. Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed. Every good gift, and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights with whom is no variableness neither shadow of turning." Sin is thus made to proceed, not from any positive quality imparted by the Creator—but from the defect which necessarily attaches to the creature, and which can only be supplied by the descent of good influences from above. At this rate, God is conceived to be no more the Author of sin, than the sun in the firmament is of the cold in ice. This cold, too, is but a mere thing of privation—implying, not the existence of any force in active opposition to caloric, not even the total absence of caloric, but only the deficient supply of it. So far from this coldness of the ice being due to the sun, it is to the sun it owes that it is not much colder—for from him it has derived all the caloric by which it is raised above the state of absolute zero; and from the same quarter alone can receive those further supplies by which its heart of stone may be taken out of it, and its present intractable nature be wholly done away. There is a precise analogy here with the view which we have just endeavoured to explain of moral evil in its relation to God.

12. At the conclusion of Leibnitz's Essay on the Goodness of God and the Liberty of Man, &c.,

we have an admirable precis of his system entituled "Abrége de la Controverse reduites à des Argumens en forme." "Abridgment of the Controversy formally reduced into its Arguments."

13. Let us conclude the exposition of this theory with a short extract from another treatise of Leibnitz written in Latin—and in which he has given to his system the advantage of all that laconic distinctness and force that are characteristic of the language. It is entitled "Causa Dei asserta per justitiam ejus, cum ceteris ejus perfectionibus, cunctisque actionibus conciliatam." "The Cause of God vindicated by the reconciliation of His justice with His other perfections, and with all his actions."

14. The following may be regarded as a succinct expression of his Theory on the origin of evil. —"Nimirum (ut facili exemplo utamar) cum flumen naves secum defert, velocitatem illis imprimit, sed ipsorum inertia limitatam, ut quæ (cæteris paribus) oneratiores sunt, tardius feruntur. Ita fit ut celeritas sit a flumine, tarditas ab onere; positivum a virtute impellentis privativum ab inertia impulsi.

"Eodem plane modo Deum dicendum est creaturis perfectionem tribuere sed quæ receptivitate ipsarum limitatur; ita bona erunt a Divino vigore, mala a torpore creaturæ."—*Causa Dei asserta.* Stat. 71, 72.

"Doubtless, (that we may use an easy example) when a river carries ships along with it, it impresses a velocity upon them, but a velocity that is limited by their own inertia—so that *(ceteris paribus)* those which were laden are borne down more

slowly. The thing is so, that the velocity cometh from the river, the slowness from the cargo—what is positive from the virtue of the impellent, what is privative from the inertia of the thing impelled.

"In the same manner, plainly, it is to be said, that God bestoweth perfection upon his creatures, but a perfection limited by their receptivity—so that what is good cometh from the strength of God, what is evil from the torpor of the creature."

15. Such being the constitution of the creature, and for aught we can say to the contrary his necessary constitution, as also for aught we can say to the contrary the constitution the best adapted to the general good—God may have called it into being, not because He willed the imperfection which arose from it, but because He willed that best possible form of a universe in which it was enveloped. God chose the actual universe, not because of the evil that was in it, but because of the maximum of good which in spite of that evil was effected by its creation. The object of His choice, of what Leibnitz calls His *voluntas inclinatoria*, was the good the greatest good, and not the evil the collateral evil, that lay essentially implicated with that one universe, which, of all the possible ones that could have been conceived or might have been created, was alone capable of yielding the *summum bonum*, or the maximum of good which God could not but prefer without the forfeiture of His moral perfection. The *voluntas decretoria*, by which He determined to create such a universe as ours, may be in perfect harmony with the most serious abhorrence of evil, which in itself he never could

have desired, but only permitted in virtue of its connexion with that which as a being of supreme benevolence he could not but desire—even the greatest possible amount of good. The *voluntas decretoria* then in virtue of which evil exists, is compatible with the *voluntas inclinatoria*—in virtue of which God desires that evil may be combated, may be overcome, may be destroyed; and that all the energies of moral nature may be aroused to the uttermost against it. Our business, whether as ministers or men, is not with the *voluntas decretoria*, but to carry into effect the designs of the *voluntas inclinatoria*—or, in other words, to enter on a war of extermination with all evil whether physical or moral, to allay suffering to the uttermost and resist sin to the uttermost. Under the system of Leibnitz, which for aught we know may be true, there is room both for a *voluntas decretoria* that has originated or rather permitted the evil, and for an honest *voluntas inclinatoria* bent on the extinction of it. How honest in his opinion this last will is, Leibnitz expresses in the following sentence: "Quam seria autem hæc voluntas sit Deus ipse declaravit cum tanta asseveratione dixit —nolle mortem peccatoris, velle omnes salvos, odisse peccatum." "How sincere this will is, God himself hath declared when He said with such asseveration that He willed not the death of sinners, that He willed all men to be saved, that He hated sin!" Our business then is to act as fellow-workers with God, in being the ministers of his *voluntas inclinatoria;* and to feel that we enlist in His cause, when we enlist in opposition to moral evil.

For this purpose we should bring all the moral forces within our reach to bear on the native apathy of the human spirit; and, knowing that it is only in virtue of a good and perfect influence from above that we can be aroused from our sluggishness, we should add to the earnestness of our endeavours the earnestness of our prayers. There is a plain path set before us, which it is competent for humanity to walk in; and instruments put into our hand, which it is competent for humanity to wield. It should neither mystify nor paralyze the task of a Christian, though told that without God he can do nothing—when furthermore told, that with God working in him he is able to do all things. It only leads him to superadd devotion to diligence, to seek for light and strength from the upper sanctuary, and with the light and strength which are given to set forth on the walk of a bidden obedience. The obscurities of that transcendental speculation which now engages us, are somewhat like the clouds that overspread the firmament above—which, though they intercept the sight of the sun, still admit the light of day to circulate at large among our lowly dwelling places. And so, while the Father of lights is Himself shrouded in mystery, there has enough of radiance descended from His throne to shed a visibility over all the doings and all the duties of our pilgrimage below—enough, not to reveal the secrets of Heaven, but enough to guide the footsteps of the humble wayfarer thitherward.

16. We do not bid any adopt this theory; but we ask, on the other hand, if they are able to overturn it. It may not be accompanied by such

evidences and marks of truth, as may entitle it to be received. But neither may it be accompanied by such marks of falsehood as should condemn it to be rejected. There is many an hypothesis in this intermediate situation—capable neither of proof nor of disproof—and yet logically, we think, of important use in Theology.

17. We confess ourselves to have been charmed and impressed by this adventurous speculation. Yet it is against our whole philosophy of evidence, whether in Theology or in any other subject, to sustain the beauty of a speculation as a substitute for its tried and ascertained truth. Our respect for the findings of experience so overpasses our relish for the fancies of human ingenuity—we are so impressed by the sacredness of that limit, which divides the knowable from the unknowable—we feel so much how daring and illegitimate it is to pass beyond, into that forbidden territory which, in the absence of observation or testimony, we can only people at best with specious imaginations of our own—that our best object in presenting these views of Leibnitz on a theme so transcendental as the origin of evil, would be to effect any positive conviction in their favour. It is for a different purpose from that of dogmatizing any into his opinion that we have now brought it forward. We do not want them so to estimate its proofs as to pronounce that it is true. It will be quite enough for us that we cannot so dispose of its plausibilities as to pronounce that it is false. Even in this ambiguous condition, it will be found to be not without its use—and though in itself but a

specious hypothesis, yet be of substantial service to our cause.

18. A conjecture, then, a mere conjecture, at once unproved and unrefuted and alike unsusceptible of both, may be of most effective influence in the business of argumentation. It may be of no force in the upholding of any position—and yet be all-powerful in neutralizing the objection to it of adversaries. The origin of evil is a topic that has been wielded by infidels in opposition to the cause of religion, as making against the justice or benevolence of God. The defenders of this cause may not be able to offer a positive solution of the difficulty—yet of the multitude, if there be but one likely solution, or even one that cannot be disproved, this is enough to relieve the cause of that discredit which antagonists would lay upon it. It may have nought but an assumption to rest upon, an assumption which we can allege no reason nor experience for—yet enough in all sound logic for the purpose of defence, if we can allege no reason nor experience against it. A conjecture is made, which if admitted to be true, would reconcile the existence of a certain phenomenon with the character of God. We may not be able to demonstrate that it is true. But as little may our opponents be able to demonstrate that it is false. In this state, we cannot say of the thing conjectured that we know it to be true —but we can say that for aught we know it may be true. This is not enough for the establishment of a dogma. But it is enough for the displacing of an objection. And thus an hypothesis of far less imposing semblance than that of Leibnitz,

though not sufficient to warrant its own absolute deliverance on the origin of evil, may suffice to disarm this mysterious theme of all that hostile application wherewith it has been turned to the prejudice of the faith.

19. The truth is, that an affirmation from the mouth of an enemy, and the counter-affirmation from the mouth of a friend wherewith it has been met, may both of them relate to a subject placed beyond the limit which separates our known from our unknown. The one nullifies the other. Both may be expunged: and, as in mathematics, when equals are taken from unequals the remainders may be unequal. In other words, after the termination of such a contest, the proper evidences of religion may remain in all their native superiority and force. A hostile argument had been conjured up by one party from the dim and shadowy region of invisibles; and had been laid by one in its own likeness, or by the defensive argument of another party raised from the same quarter and fashioned of the same materials. A hypothetical argument on the side of religion, though it should give birth to no positive conclusion, might at least match and so extinguish the hypothetical argument opposed to it. It is at best but an aerial contest on a *terra incognita*, which, after its settlement leaves all the supports of our faith that are planted on the *terra firma* or *terra cognita*, in a state of as unshaken strength and solidity as before. Such is the nature and such the effect of the controversy on the origin of evil. It is altogether a spectral warfare, stirred by one airy element, and dispersed

by another—after which the real and palpable evidences of Religion may be seen in all the uninjured strength which originally and properly belongs to them—the Natural reposing, as at the first, on the lucid indications of design which are in us and around us—the Christian, firmly seated on the testimony of our fellow-men, or the still more familiar depositions of our own consciousness.

20. Therefore it is that conjectures, even mere conjectures, if only beyond the reach of positive refutation, are of use in Theology. When their object is demonstrative, they may well be regarded as idle speculations. But when their object is defensive, they are worthy of being retained, though for no other service, than to neutralize the idle speculations of Infidelity. This is their proper function—and to the thorough discharge of it they are altogether adequate. Like meets with like; and the result of this contest between adverse but homogeneous elements, is that both, at length, are placed *hors de combat*. The ultimate fruit of the effervescence is to clear off the whole matter from Theology, so as to disencumber the science of it altogether. What is sound or substantial remains; while the arguments on both sides of some mystic speculation which at one time exercised all spirits, and took universal possession of the schools, pass into oblivion among the evanescent shadows and impracticable subtleties of a by-gone age.

21. We have not all the confidence of Leibnitz himself, in his own solution of the darkest enigma that ever exercised the human faculties. We hold that in our present state it is unresolvable. But

though we cannot pronounce his explanation to be perfect, yet we esteem it to be profitable—deferring, as we do, to the wisdom and soundness which lie in his following remarks: "We have explained enough, when we have shown that there are cases, where some disorder in a part is necessary to the production of the greatest order on the whole. But M. Bayle, it appears, demands a little too much. He wishes that we should show him in detail, how evil is linked with the best possible plan of a universe. This would be a perfect explanation of the phenomenon. But we undertake not to give it—and what is more, we are not obliged to give it, a thing impossible in our present state. It is enough for us to make the observation that nothing hinders, but that a certain particular evil may be linked with that which viewed in its totality is the best. *This imperfect explanation, and which leaves something to be discovered in another life, is sufficient for a solution of objections, but not for a comprehension of the thing.*"

22. There is a striking illustration on this subject, which seems to be quite incidentally given by Leibnitz, as it is all contained within the limits of a parenthesis, or at most of a sentence. He is speaking of our disadvantage for observation from our seeing but a part and not the whole universe—whereas whenever admitted to see any individual piece of mechanism, not in separate parts but completely, we find a contrivance and a beauty which exceed imagination. There is experimental proof of this in organic bodies, as a bird, or a quadruped, or a vegetable. If restricted to the view of one

small part or operation, such as a bone, or the pile of a feather, or a bit of membrane or nail or muscle or tendon or root, what a meaningless thing it would look; and how utterly devoid of all apparent utility or gracefulness! Yet what use and significancy do we behold in each of these parts, when we can comprehensively take in the whole, and see them all united together into one machine or piece of complex symmetry. And it is the same of the universe—that stupendous machine—whereof we only behold a minute and microscopic portion—lost alike in the immensity of its grasp, and in the infinite diversity of its objects and their relations. And when to the littleness of our observation in space, we superadd the littleness of our observation in time, what increased emphasis is given to the lesson. Let us but ascend from the revolution of the planets round the sun to the revolution of the planetary systems around a common centre—and it will appear, that we live in the midst of most magnificent periods, to which the life of one individual, and indeed the whole known history of the species is but a humble and evanescent fraction. We know not what the objects or the scenes in the mighty untravelled distances around us—we know not what the evolutions of the boundless futurity before us. We are beset with mystery and magnitude on every hand—infinitesimals in the midst of undefined vastness—walking in a territory that has no limits—and describing an interval of time that merges at each extreme into the darkness of Eternity. There is apparent disorder and derangement in the universe—but this is only to us, with our

partial or our ephemeral view of it. To the eye of Him who contains it in the hollow of His hand, and sees its end from its beginning, there may be no disorder. He views it in all its completeness; and He alone is the competent witness of all its harmony. It is surely an important experience on this question that every completed thing which we are permitted to observe possesses within itself a complete harmony. Each part is in most perfect keeping with the whole—and nothing can be changed, for the purpose of being mended, without injury and disturbance to a mechanism otherwise perfect and admirable. Is it not therefore our wisdom to suspend a problem, which we so obviously are not in a condition to resolve—to wait with humble contentment and confidence for the final issue and development of all things, for that day of manifestation, when we shall see God as He is, and know even as we are known?

23. And, without waiting for the consummation of all things, we find, even in our brief experience, that evil is frequently the parent and the precursor of good—that like as fatigue gives to repose its sweetness, so adversity gives to virtue its elevation—that prosperity yields a greater satisfaction because of the precedent ills and vicissitudes which often usher it into being—above all, that by painful conflict with the physical, the moral may be cradled into maturity, and both with nations and individuals obtain a lustre and a strength which no other discipline gives rise to. We have only to imagine the same law to have place and fulfilment in the general history of the universe, which we

ourselves witness exemplified in so many of its details; and then should we look on the sufferings of the present state as but the throes and the portents of some great coming enlargement going before, and even working out a far more exceeding happiness and glory to those who are exercised thereby. We do not say, that upon any observation of ours, we can found such an hypothesis, as shall give to Nature the full and positive assurance of a surpassing compensation for evil in the present system of things: But it is, at least, such an hypothesis, as should suspend, if it do not solve, the objections of the infidel—and leave to the proper evidences of Religion, whether Natural or Revealed all that inherent and native strength, which originally belongs to them.

24. We cannot take leave of this subject without adverting, for one moment, to the writings of Leibnitz; and to a certain peculiar interest and charm which they possess in relation to Theology. There is, in some of his philosophic speculations, an extravagance which we very much regret, because of the general discredit which it has laid on him, and which extends even to his sounder and better views. It has been said of Thomson, that he looked at every thing with the eye of a poet. We would say of Leibnitz that he looked at every thing with the eye of a lofty academic—and in virtue of which he presents us, not with a substantially different orthodoxy from the Fathers of the Reformation —but he recommends it to minds of a certain cast, presented as it is by him in the complexion, and couched in the phraseology of general science. We

know nothing more delightful than the respectful notices, made by this distinguished Savant, of the Augsburgh confession, of Luther and Calvin and even our own Samuel Rutherford. There is a refreshing contrast here, with the whole tone and spirit of our more recent Philosophy; and in this age of little men, who look to our Theology as altogether an ignoble speculation, we feel an abundant recompense for their contempt, when we behold the homage that was rendered to it by the colossal intellects of other days.

CHAPTER III.

Use of Hypothesis in Theology.

ON THE DOCTRINE OF A SPECIAL PROVIDENCE AND THE EFFICACY OF PRAYER.

1. The use of an Hypothesis in Theology is not to establish any proposition, but, which is a very different service, to vindicate it. The proposition in question may be altogether sustained on appropriate evidences of its own; and the hypothesis which has been conjured up in its defence may add nothing affirmative to these evidences. But though it makes no accession either to their number or their strength, it does much if it but throw a shield of protection over them; and this it does when it displaces or neutralizes the hostile argument which has been devised for their overthrow.

2. This important function in the business of intellectual warfare can be discharged by an hypothesis, though in itself of no higher character than an unsupported imagination; and that, to a much greater extent in theology than is commonly imagined. We have already offered one specimen of its efficacy in repelling an objection that has been made against the theological system in general. We now proceed to another in which we hold it to be alike effectual for the vindication of a specific doctrine in theology—even the doctrine or rather doctrines of a special providence and the efficacy of prayer.

3. We select these doctrines all the more willingly, that, if we succeed in our proposed vindication of them, it will serve to counteract a tendency which is very prevalent, though incident chiefly to minds of a speculative and philosophical habitude, and to rectify, in fact, the whole character of their theism. The tendency of which we speak is to regard the Deity as a principle, rather than as a person. They look to Him more in the light of a physical energy than of a living agent—of one whose pervading force moves and upholds and regulates the whole economy of nature throughout its countless diversities of operation; but not of one who thinks, and wills, and purposes, and is affected as our minds are by the impulse of emotions that vary with the objects which we contemplate. When we look upward to the Supreme and Eternal spirit, we lose, in the thought of a great and comprehensive agency, those features which serve either to individualize the character or to liken the

Divinity at all to ourselves. And certainly, long after we have been familiarized to the conception of the Divinity as a power, and even long after this conception has been fortified within us by the doctrines and the demonstrations of theism—still we may be utter strangers to the habit of viewing Him as a person. And so with the full homage of our theoretical recognitions to the Godhead, may we be really and practically in a state of atheism.

4. There is one obvious effect of thus ranking Him, even though we should assign to Him the supreme rank among the great physical powers and principles of our universe. That which we hold to be the right and the rational proceeding in regard to any of these inferior powers, we shall hold to be the right and the rational proceeding in regard to the Deity. Take the power of gravitation for an example. We give the homage of our admiration to its universality. We look abroad with delight, and at the same time with a certain sense of loftiness in our spirit, on the wide and beneficent range of its influences in nature. It is with ecstasy, but an ecstasy altogether philosophic, that, emanating as it were from the fountain-head of this simple but sublime principle, we behold the goodly train of phenomena that result from it. We have given to it the name of a law; and feel somewhat of the deference that is rendered to a mighty jurisdiction, when we observe how it sends forth its mandates to the very outskirts of the universe—so that distant and innumerable worlds lie within the sweep of its ample operation. But while we thus behold it as if seated on a throne of

ideal majesty, we should never think of addressing it as a conscious and a living agent. We should hold it to be idolatry, did we offer to it the worship of any adoration, and a more abject superstition still, did we lift the voice of supplication at its shrine—did we ask it, for example, to modify any of its own processes, or to suspend for some caprice and convenience of ours a constancy which heretofore has been unexcepted and unalterable.

5. Now let us conceive this way of viewing the principle of gravitation to be transferred to the principle of a Deity. We might readily award to this last a power of the same force and the same unity—the same pervading agency, simple perhaps in its origin, but most munificent and most prolific in its beneficial results—the same mathematical certainty of guidance and direction over all the processes of nature—and the same unfailing necessity of movement, which it were utterly hopeless should ever at the forth-putting of human desire be changed or arrested in its course. The two principles are viewed as alike in regard to their absolute control over all the subordinate phenomena, and alike both as to the sureness of these phenomena and the inflexibility of that moving force from which they have emanated. We may perceive how natural the transition is then, by which God is regarded as a principle, and ceases to be regarded as a person. The admiration may be heightened into a sort of intellectual adoration. The delight wherewith one beholds the utilities of a law in nature, may, when we reflect on the Divinity as its supreme law, be mingled with a

sort of still and contemplative gratitude. But it were deemed a monstrous violation of all philosophy to proceed any further—to think, for example, of looking for any interference in our own special behalf with a process that is deemed to be unchangeable, or of thwarting by the expression of human desire any one operation of that great mechanism which is animated throughout by an unchangeable Deity. And hence the wide imagination that it is the part of man in such a universe as this to submit to God but not to supplicate, to ponder but not to pray.

6. We may here perceive how the extreme of superstition stands contrasted with the extreme of philosophical impiety. The one would personify all nature; and treat with its various elements and powers as if they were so many distinct and living agents; and offer incense to the imagined spirits that reside in the air, and the ocean, and the thunder, and the luminaries of heaven; and fancy them as yielding to the entreaties of their worshippers, and with all the spontaneity of beings that had a will and could be prevailed over by the urgency of human solicitation, that they would vacillate in their courses at the mere utterance of a desire on the part of those who had propitiated their favour. Now in this our enlightened day we stand at the distance of many centuries from such a grovelling imagination. Nature has been purged, as it were, of all those mythologies by which it was conceived to be peopled throughout its various departments. The torch of philosophy has put them like so many spectres to flight; and the dis-

ciples of our modern science, in proportion as they pursue their investigations into the processes of the universe, find more and more in them of unfaltering constancy. In regard to all the secondary causes, the study of which is the business of philosophy, they have unlearned the whole superstition of other days; but here lies their error, that in ascending from these to the first cause, they have unlearned the whole religion of other days. They may ascribe to this paramount and ruling power both an intellect and a will; but still in the main it is as a physical energy that they regard Him. They look on the Supreme Principle to be in every way as inflexible and sure as they have uniformly found of the subordinate principles; and that He is as unfit to be addressed by a petition or the expression of a wish, as any fancied spirit that may reside in a volcano or a storm, or in any other department of Nature's vast machinery—that the cries of urgency and distress are of no more avail when sent up to Him who wields the elements of the world, as if they were only lifted to the elements themselves—that the same unchangeableness which pervades all nature is also the characteristic of nature's God: And so they deem to be an aberration from sound philosophy, both the doctrine of a special providence and the observation of prayer.

7. Now this is regarding God as if He were a principle; but it is not treating or regarding Him as if he were a person. It might be well to think a little of the respective ways, in which we make a principle and a person subservient to some object that our hearts are set upon. We can turn

gravitation to the accomplishment of our purposes. We can avail ourselves of it as a moving force. We can put a piece of mechanism in its way, on which, without any such thing as a request on our part, it will act as an impellent. We can bring a wheel to a stream of flowing water; and then we do not bid the impulse, but the impulse takes place not in obedience to any voice of ours—but in obedience to the uniformity of Nature's secondary causes. Now we go differently to work, when instead of employing a principle, we employ a person to turn the wheel for us. There may in this case be the authority of a bidding, or there may be the earnestness of a request, or there may be the imploring cry of a humble petition, that we may prevail with him to render us some necessary service. We must see at once the distinction that there is between the two styles of proceeding—how it is in one way that man acts upon inanimate things, that he might bind them into subserviency; and in another that he acts upon his fellows in society—nor should we be any more at a loss to understand wherein it is that the difference lies between the mere regarding of God as a principle, and the regard with the corresponding treatment of Him as a person.

8. And it must be obvious, that we can in no way avail ourselves of God as a principle, in the manner that we can the secondary the subordinate principles which be around us. We cannot make use of Him, as we do of the energy of gravitation. We cannot, if I may dare thus to express myself, we cannot manipulate with the powers and the

processes of the Divinity. We cannot put forth our hand as we do on the surrounding materialism, and turn to mechanical account any of those physical energies of God, which are all that they who view Him as a principle merely are disposed to ascribe to him. And if therefore we cannot take the other way of gaining Him over to any of our objects or desires; if we cannot bring a suasion or a power of supplication and entreaty to bear upon Him, as we do upon our fellows in society; if, beyond the reach as He is of any mechanical, He be alike beyond the reach of any moral application that we can possibly make to go forth upon the Deity—then does there lie a hopeless and impassable barrier between us and Him who is called the Father of our spirits; and, alike excluded from any use that we can desire to make of Him as a principle and from any more direct service that we might seek to obtain from Him as a person, the Parent of the human family stands at a cheerless and impracticable distance from all His children—seeing that if viewed as a physical energy still they can turn Him to no account, or viewed as a living being still they can hold with Him no fellowship.

9. Nevertheless, let the antipathies of Philosophy be what they may, we hold that there is no repugnance between the soundest principles of Philosophy and the simple credence of humble and unlettered piety upon this question.

10. Prayer and the answer of Prayer, according to the popular and we shall even say the natural understanding, are simply, the preferring of a request upon the one side, and compliance with

that request upon the other. Man applies, God complies. Man asks a favour, God bestows it. These are conceived to be the two terms of a real interchange that takes place between the parties —the two terms of a sequence, in fact, whereof the antecedent is a prayer lifted up from Earth, and the consequent is the fulfilment of that prayer in virtue of a mandate from Heaven.

11. We must not disguise it—that this view of prayer is the object of a strong philosophical antipathy—as implying a perpetual invasion on those established and general laws of nature which are conceived to be unchangeable. It is painfully offensive to a mind habituated to the investigation of causes, to admit of any fitful or capricious deviation from the march and regularity of those magnificent progressions which in its view compose the history of our universe. It cannot bear that the certainties of nature and of science should be so intermeddled with—and grievously would it mar the luxury of many a philosophic contemplation, if, instead of a universe whose efficient principles gave birth to their respective trains of subordinate and strictly dependent phenomena, and whose phenomena could all be traced to the operation of fixed and invariable principles—the harmonies of so noble a mechanism were to be thwarted at every turn, by the power which lay in the inclinations of man to call forth through that efficacy which is ascribed to prayer, the special interventions of the Deity. There is no conception which so adheres to the mind of a philosopher as the unaltered, if not the unalterable constancy of Nature; or, in other

words, the invariableness of that order where, by a process sure as necessity itself, the same antecedents are followed up by the same consequents. He cannot give place in his creed to the efficacy of specific prayer—because he never has observed, and he scarcely can imagine that the firm concatenation of nature's sequences is in any instance broken. He will acquiesce in the doctrine of a general providence—if by this be meant the primary institution of a great mundane system, left thenceforward to its own evolutions. He will even acquiesce in the significancy of prayer, if by this be meant the homage of our exprest dependence, or if uttered for the sake of a reflex influence on the mind of the petitioner, and not for the sake of a direct influence on the mind of the Divinity. But prayer, in the obvious sense of it, as a thing of asking on the one side and of receiving upon the other—prayer as invested with a controlling force over the processes of nature and history—prayer as an engine by which to shift or to modify the succession of events—this were disturbing, it is felt, the regularities of the visible creation—and it is a feeling which gives painful disturbance to the enamoured student of these regularities. It is resented as a sort of breach or violence on all that wont to regale his imagination and intellect; and thus, amongst the disciples of modern science, amongst physical inquirers, and that whether into the physics of matter or the physics of the mind, it is in dissonance with all their habits of conception —when told either of the doctrine of a special Providence or of the efficacy of prayer.

12. Though but at the outset of our argument upon this subject, we may as well at once make it known, that our own understanding of prayer, is in the plain or popular acceptation of the term. We hold that there is in it a real interchange between earth and heaven; and that for the requests of faith and piety which ascend from the habitations of men below, there do come down actual returns from the upper sanctuary. The asking upon the one side is met by a consent, and so a giving or a performance upon the other. Not all the visions of philosophy however beauteous could tempt us to such a freedom with the literalities of scripture, as to rationalize and explain away prayer, so as to reduce it in fact to a thing of nought. But while, in such a cause we should resist the seductions of philosophy, it is also our duty, as far as in us lies, to soften and if possible do away its prejudices. This of itself is an important object. And what at present inclines us more especially to the prosecution of it is, that we expect in the course of our argument to unfold the harmony which obtains between the spirit of activity and the spirit of devotion—to show that neither of these two supersedes the other, but that while labour without prayer may be utterly abortive, prayer does not supersede but should rather stimulate labour.

13. But let us, as we are able, meet the prepossessions of philosophy upon this subject; and if it may be, reconcile its disciples to that which in fact is the most natural and characteristic expression of piety, and certainly, the most powerful engine of religious cultivation.

14. Every thing has its philosophy, which is neither more nor less than the rationale or the true state of that thing. It may perhaps be felt as rather an adventurous expression when we speak of the philosophy of prayer. Nevertheless it is a subject which like every other possible object of contemplation admits of academic treatment—the treatment which is proper for it when, on the principle of being all things to all men that we might gain some, the design is if possible to soften the antipathies of academic men.

15. First of all, then, let it be observed that the doctrine of the efficacy of prayer but introduces a new sequence to the notice of the mind—whereas it seems to be quarrelled with by philosophy, on the ground that it disturbs and distempers the regularity of all sequences. It may add another law of nature to those which have been formerly observed—but this surely may be done without invasion on the constancy of nature. The general truth may be preserved, that the same result always follows in the same circumstances, although it should be discovered that prayer is one of those influential circumstances by which the result is liable to be modified. The law of magnetism does not repeal, it does not even interrupt the law of gravitation, although the loadstone should keep the iron weight that is suspended beneath it from falling to the ground. There is still a certain and invariable effect produced, in this instance, by the action of two forces, each of which is certain and invariable. There is nothing in this to disturb the actual mechanism of nature—but only to

complicate it. Nature, after this discovery, may appear a more complex, but not a more capricious mechanism than before. It may disclose to observation a new train of sequences which must interfere occasionally with other trains—when it will modify, but in no way derange, the workings of a sure and regular economy. What then, if prayer and the fulfilment of prayer are but the two terms of a sequence—having the effect like every other sequence to complicate the processes of nature, but not to bring them under the misrule of a fitful and wayward contingency?—insomuch that the doctrine of the efficacy of prayer may be no more in conflict than the doctrine of the composition of forces, with the steadfastness of nature, and the regularities of a harmonious universe.

16. There is one species of prayer, whereof it may be said, that we have daily experience of its efficacy—the request, or as it may be called the prayer, which man in the interchange of business and common life has so often occasion to make to his fellow-men. In urging with our importunities any brother of the species, we are not making infringement on the constancy of nature—we are in fact proceeding upon that constancy. We are but presuming that nature will persevere in her wonted order—when we are trying the effect of human entreaty upon human feelings. We are then availing ourselves of one of nature's most frequent sequences; and founding our expectations of the future on our recollections and experience of the past. When we make appliance to matter of any physical or mechanic forces, we make an

experiment in Natural Philosophy. And when we make appliance to mind of those forces which lie in persuasion or prayer, we may be said to make an experiment in Moral Philosophy. The uniformity of nature is alike recognised in both these processes. The influence of one man's wish upon another man's will is but one law of that moral constitution which God hath ordained; and it is one on which very many of the reciprocities of life are made to turn. The fortune of individuals often hangs upon it; and, could we see into the arcana of courts and of cabinets, we should find that the link which connects the askings of one man with the compliances of another is that on which the greatest movements and evolutions of history are suspended. Yet history has her sure and steady march; and an actual philosophy has been framed out of her materials. The efficacy of prayer between man and man forms one of the component parts of that philosophy. It has its place among the other laws and processes of the moral system, and is as much established in the world of mind as the law of gravitation is in the world of matter. Man does no more violence to the immutabilities of nature, by putting forth with effect his urgent appeals to the pliant and susceptible spirit of a fellow-man; than he does by putting forth his hand with effect to the manifestations of chemistry.

17. Prayer and compliance with prayer form the two terms of a sequence in human society; and is assuredly not more fitted to introduce derangement and disorder into that economy than

any other of its laws. It consists as much with the regularity and the sureness of this mechanism that the petition of one man should move the consent of another, as that the beneficence of the one should move the other to gratitude, or that his injustice should move to resentment, or that his wit should move to laughter, or that his virtue should move to esteem, or that his genius should move to admiration. These are so many laws of the human constitution; and that particular law by which it is, that one man's desire, preferred in the form of a request, should move another man to generosity or compassion—so far from invading the regularities of our mental system, is itself one of these regularities. It forms one of the vehicles on which the history of the human species is carried forward—a moving force in that vast and complicated mechanism, all whose evolutions nevertheless have as sure a dependence on the nature and principles of the mechanism, as the movements of the Planetary System have on the few simple laws that belong to Astronomy. When one man asks and another man bestows, it is in virtue of an established sequence; that still preserves the moral economy of Creation in a certain and established order. And multiplied as these sequences are—countless though they be, both in diversity and in number, throughout all the walks of human society—largely mingling and partaking though they do with other laws and other sequences—yet altogether, we behold a progression that is steadfast and a combination that is harmonious. And there is positively nought in this one succession between

prayer as the antecedent, and a returning favour as the consequent, that more than any other of the numberless successions which take place whether in the mental or the material creation, introduces anarchy or offers violence to the harmonies of nature.

18. Now, instead of looking to the prayers which reciprocate between man and man, and which move in perpetual circulation throughout the mass of society—let us consider those prayers which ascend by a direct path to the throne of Heaven—being addressed to the ear, and submitted to the immediate cognizance of Him who sitteth thereon. Is it unlikely, that He who hath ordained a system of things under which the influence that we now speak of is in busy and constant operation among the creatures whom He hath made; and who yet, instead of disturbing therewith the constancy of nature, has in fact turned it into one of those laws by which the constancy is upholden—is it unlikely that He may cause that very influence to pass and repass between the Father who is above, and the family that are beneath Him, which finds its way in a thousand beneficent sympathies from one member of it to another? When men are the askers and men also are the givers, He can, amid all the caprices of human appetite and fancy, still uphold the regularities both of a moral and a natural economy. And will his wisdom so fail Him in that case, when Himself called upon to be the Giver, that in the immutability whether of His perfections or of His works, there shall be a barrier which He cannot overpass between the importunities of His

children and the generosity of His own nature? Will He not know how to dispose kindly and mercifully, of those petitions which ascend to the pavilion of His residence, without introducing misrule and mismanagement into nature—or breaking in upon the well arranged and orderly successions of that universe which He has formed?

19. We are aware of a difficulty here, related to the metaphysics of the divine nature—a subject which in our present state, and with our present faculties, is wrapped in hopeless obscurity; and yet by which the attempt is often made to speculate away all those mental acts and exercises in reference to God, which constitute the very essence of Religion. One ground, indeed, on which antipathy is felt to the obvious and ordinary conception of prayer, is that it implies the imagination of a certain state of mind in the Deity being the consequent, to a certain state of mind in the creature who addresses Him. Now on this yet inaccessible mystery we will not dogmatize. We will not venture to speak of the affections of the Deity as related to time or succession at all. But surely we may so speak of the palpable acts of the Deity—and we may also regard these acts as the expression of His mind and character. We will not dare to lift the curtain which hangs over the thoughts and processes of the Supreme Intelligence—but surely it is competent for us to observe and to reason on the visible forth-goings of the Divine power; and to regard them as indications of the divine character. When he causes a certain consequent to follow in the train of a certain antecedent, he

demonstrates how it is that he stands affected with regard to the antecedent. If prayer and the fulfilment of prayer be a general sequence in the divine administration—this, without our diving among the arcana either of intelligence or feeling in the heart of the Deity, warrants the representation of God, as a God who acts at least in the very way He would have done, had He at the moment yielded himself to the entreaties of His children—Such sequences, in fact, and such expressions founded upon them are implied in the whole conception of a moral government. Is not the righteousness of one man said to call forth the love of the Divinity?—and the iniquity of another hatred? Does not the misery of a suffering creature call forth His compassion? Does not the stout and daring rebellion of an offending creature call forth His wrath and His purposes of vengeance? And what else is the efficacy of prayer, but just a certain attitude of mind on the part of the creature, being followed up, if not by a certain respondent attitude of mind, at least, by a certain respondent act, and one which in ourselves would be expressive of our complacency or pity, on the part of the Creator? Be a virtuous disciple and I will reward you—is just as much and as little an invasion on the simplicities of the universe, as be a humble suppliant and I will bestow upon you. And the same observation may be extended to any sequence which it is possible to assign, whether in the moral or the natural economy. That a request on the part of man should be followed up by an accomplishment on the part of God, implies no greater

descent or degradation of the Supreme Being, than that any one antecedent in Creation should be followed by its consequent. It is wrong to represent it as a kind of subservient accommodation on the part of the Creator to the creature. It is simply the Creator carrying into effect His own established processes. Present the Deity with certain conditions—and He is always sure to act in a certain manner. But this is not because He is overruled by the conditions. It is because He rules over the conditions—and, being a God who changeth not, He rules over them in a certain manner. When heat acts upon a liquid, He follows it up with evaporation. When it acts upon a solid substance, He follows it up with liquefaction. When the kindness of one heart acts upon another, He follows it up with gratitude. When the imploring cry of a sufferer acts upon the sensibilities of a fellow of the species, He follows it up with the sympathy and compliance of Him to whom it is addressed. And when this imploring cry is directly lifted to Himself—He, in virtue of a sequence as firmly established and as essentially implicated with the general system of the universe, as any other of the trains, and sequences that enter into its vast machinery, follows it up with some wise and gracious ministration.

20. Thus it is that the doctrine of the efficacy of prayer just introduces another train of sequences into the universe, of as uniform a character as any other of the innumerable trains which enter into the history whether of the moral or of the material world. The whole system of things remains as

much as before under the system of general laws—or rather under the conduct and guidance of a God who is unchangeable. The gorgeous spectacle so pleasing to a philosophic eye, of a creation, which, through all its amplitudes, maintains an unfaltering constancy in the succession of its phenomena, or the unvarying recurrence of the same consequents to the same antecedents is upheld in all its entireness. This great religious tenet may thus be rendered, and without any unworthy compromise, less offensive to the taste of physical inquirers. But their more serious objection is that it does not accord with their experience. They allege that they never can discover any trace of the palpable and ordinary sequences in nature being at all modified by a superadded sequence connected with the influence of prayer. Grant that any newly observed sequence should be implicated or enter into composition with those which had been already known, it must surely affect, in some way or other, the final result of any complex process; and make it different from what it would have been. Now the philosopher might aver, that any alteration of nature's sequences, through the accession of another sequence brought on by the intervention of prayer, never once met his observation. He will admit that, in the case of prayer addressed from man to man, he may have repeatedly experienced it —as when he asked his companion to lift some weight from the earth, and the thing was done in counteraction to the law of gravitation; or to fetch back some light but valuable article that the wind was blowing away, and it was done in counteraction

to the law of impulse; or to extinguish a flame, and it was done in counteraction to the law of combustion—and all this without exception to the generality of nature's laws, but only by the complication of one sequence with others formerly in operation. But never, may it be insisted by the close observers of nature and her phenomena—never, did they once obtain the experimental view of any familiar sequences in nature having been thus thwarted, or having had an arrest laid upon them by means of prayer to the unseen God. They have noticed this done a thousand times by the visible hands of men—but never once, they affirm, by the invisible hand of the Almighty. Not that they expected to see His hand—but grant the efficacy of prayer to Him—and they would expect to see the effect of its interposition. Instead of which all their experience proclaims a course and a constancy in visible nature from which, as far as their observations go, she never deviates—insomuch that never does the imploring cry of all the families arrest, by the reversal of one law, that loosened avalanche which buries the hamlet in its fall—and never is it found that the prayer of unhappy inmates will arrest the conflagration of a house by the reversal of another law, or stripping the fire of its wonted property and power—and never that mariners are saved by the intermission of another law either in the impulse of the wind upon the waves, or in the impulse of the waves upon a vessel too frail for the onset of the mighty tempest which has assailed it. In all these, and in every other instance, it is affirmed, there is no appearance

whatever of any intromission with the processes of nature, as far at least as these processes are visible. She seems to move in her wonted order without deviation. By the most careful and searching experiments, there cannot be detected the vestige of any unseen power that has been at work with the sure and regular march of her sequences. In a word all the successions both in mind and matter to the extent in which they have been perceived and classified are to all sense invariable, so as that the same consequents palpably come forth of the same antecedents. And how, in the face of all this observation, shall we expect to shift the order of events by our supplication, or how can we have confidence in the efficacy of prayer?

21. After all the generalities which have been hitherto advanced by us, this remains a palpable and obstinate phenomenon which would need if possible to be disposed of. Prayer with its fulfilment must be admitted as one of those innumerable sequences which obtain in nature—had we but the evidence for its reality. But if indeed an actual sequence, we should be able, it is thought, to discover the traces of it when it came to be complicated with and so to modify or disturb the order of other sequences. It is quite conceivable that prayer and its fulfilment might be one of the many laws in nature, and yet nature *on the whole* maintain her constancy. But the stubborn fact, and a fact which stands in the way of this alleged efficacy of prayer, is, that, notwithstanding the intervention of this supposed and additional law, *visible* nature maintains her constancy, and as far

as appears, in the very way she would have done though there had been no such law. We see no evidence, it is affirmed, of the constancy of visible nature giving way to that invisible agency, the interposition of which it is the express purpose of prayer to obtain. The effect of such agency, did it ever come into operation, would be to overrule the other established processes that have place in the economy of the world; and the strength of the objection lies in this, that we never witness any such overruling of these processes.

22. In reply to this let us endeavour to ascertain if by any possible or hypothetical method, the answer to prayer may be effectively given without any infringement on the known regularities of nature. These regularities consist in the invariableness of certain successions—each term of which is the consequent of the one that went before it, and the antecedent of the one that comes after it. Grant that the contiguous links of any one chain, as far upward as we are able to trace them, follow each other in precisely the same order—it should be recollected of the chief terrestrial processes which are going on around us, that the chain does not terminate at the point where our observation terminates—that, somewhere along the ascent of our investigation, the mechanism ceases to be palpable and begins to be obscure, till at length it is shrouded, as if by an impenetrable veil, from our notice altogether—and that although we can trace the steps of a causal progression a certain way back, it loses itself at the last among the recondite places of the mechanism. Now it signifies not

to the final result, whether the answer to prayer be given by a responsive touch from the finger of the Almighty at a higher or a lower place in the progression; as a change upon any of the terms, wherever it may be situated, will have a controlling efficacy on all the succeeding ones. Let the change then be effected far enough back, and there will be the alteration of a sequence no doubt, but without violence to any ascertained law—because a sequence beyond the reach of all our philosophy. Prayer may obtain its fulfilment without any visible reversal of the constancies of nature—provided that its first effect is upon some latent and interior spring of the mechanism, and not among its palpable evolutions. Let but the touch of communication between the Deity and His works, when He goes forth to meet the desire of any of His creatures, be behind or underneath that surface which marks and measures off the farthest verge of man's possible discovery—and then, may there be many a special request which receives as special an accomplishment, yet without disturbance to those wonted successions which either the eye of man or his nicest instruments of observation shall enable him to ascertain. But it is not easy to make this matter perspicuous in the mere use of general terms—and we must therefore attempt the illustration of it by examples.

23. Let us, for our first example, make the supposition of prayer for a prosperous voyage. It does not appear why an answer to this prayer might not be given; and yet all the established sequences in our world be maintained in their wonted order, as far back as philosophy can dis-

cover them. Instead of God dispensing with the secondary causes, when He meets and satisfies our prayers, they may be the very instruments by which He fulfils them. When He hearkens to our supplications for a prosperous voyage, this may be answered in two ways—either without the favourable wind or by means of it. If in the latter way, there has yet, in as far as the proximate sequence is concerned, been no miracle. He has not sent forth a miraculous impulse upon the vessel, but has caused the very wind to arise, which by the laws of motion should have bore her onward to the destined haven. But again, in the next higher sequence there might still have been the observation of the regularities of nature. The wind might have been caused without the condensation of vapour, or by its condensation. If in the latter way, still there is no miracle. The wind has not been originated in contravention to any known law, but has sprung up from that previous condition of the air and the vapour, which, by the doctrine of pneumatics, should cause the very gale to blow that accomplishes the service. The same might be repeated on the next sequence of this ascending progression. The vapour could have been raised without the action of heat, or by that action. If without it, the prayer has been answered miraculously—if by it, there can yet be detected no change in the processes of nature; and the prosperous voyage is the result of that previous condition of the air and the vapour and the heat, which, by the combined laws of impulse and pneumatics and chemistry, ought to have caused it. Carry these

retrogressive explanations as far as they can; and so far, that is to the uttermost limits of science, to the full extent of her possible observations, all might appear to move, or rather, might actually move, in strictly undeviating order. But still, ulterior to this, and between the remotest confines of all which nature can see upon the one hand, and that throne whence the Author of Nature issues forth His mandates, upon the other—there is a hidden intermediate process which connects the purposes of the divine mind, with the visible phenomena of that universe which He has created: and, not among the palpable things which lie exposed to view in the region of observation, but among the secret things which lie in the deep and the dark abyss that is between the furthest reach of man's discovery and the forthgoings of God's will—it is among these, where that responsive touch may be given by the finger of the Almighty, which shall guide the mechanism of the world; and without thwarting any of its ascertained laws. The limit of our investigation is not the commencement of the series. It has anterior steps yet undiscovered, and perhaps undiscoverable by us, among the depths of meteorology. It may be there, and not among the patent regularities of nature, where the answer to prayer is germinated—so as to ensure a prosperous voyage, yet without one change which philosophy with all her instruments can detect in the established successions of the universe. For this, He moves the springs which lie behind the curtain of sense and observation. But before that curtain, or in the eyes of us, the spectators of

nature's phenomena—the air and the vapour and the heat which are the ministers of God, fulfilling His word, might perform, in the exercise of their own proper and characteristic virtues, their respective evolutions, without any change whatever in the effects which they produce or in the properties which belong to them.

24. But for a second example—the prayer for a prosperous harvest may be effectually answered, and yet not be answered by miracle. The ripened harvest does not immediately start into being, at the utterance of a word—neither is it made to rise to maturity in the midst of adverse weather and unfavourable seasons, or in the absence of all the genial and kindly influences, by which it is usually fostered. The prayer may be answered yet not by the vegetation being made to flourish in the midst of storms, where it never flourished before—but by the vegetation being made to flourish as it wont, under the smile of sunshine and in the midst of peaceful elements. The plenteous harvest is given, not without the usual antecedent of favourable weather—but with or rather by this antecedent. The responsive touch is applied as before to some anterior steps among the arcana of Meteorology, whence the Almighty, at His bidding, can summon the requested weather, and conduct all the subsequent trains to their final issue in the blessings of abundance—without the reversal of any sequences that in the platform of visible things are open to human eyes. He can by antedating his reply, as it were, at a point sufficiently high in the train of causation, summon into being, not the first

antecedents, *but the first antecedents which are perceivable by us*—after which, the whole succession may proceed in perfect harmony with the laws of nature and the lessons of experience. By an interposing touch, at hidden depths in the laboratory of nature, a favourable concurrence of the elements might be made to bear on the agriculture from without—or, by the same interposition among the inaccessible laws of the vegetable physiology, a healthier or more prolific crop might be made to arise. Yet in neither department, need there be any shift in the *known* successions of the phenomena of nature; and while nought but the most steadfast uniformity can be observed on the panorama of our contemplation; yet, by an operation underneath, may the all-working God, without violence to the regularities of nature, ensure effective fulfilment to the prayers of his dependent family.

25. We hope that more illustration is superfluous—yet we cannot refrain from adverting to the instance of prayer for the continuance or the recovery of health. We appeal to those who are most conversant with the diagnostics or the prognostics of disease—for how short a way back, among the processes of the animal physiology, the investigations of their science can carry them. To answer such a prayer then, God does not need to intromit with the constancies of visible nature—for the primary fountain-head of that influence, which either medicates or distempers the human frame, is placed in a region of profoundest mystery. Here, if any where, He may work in secret, and direct the pro-

cesses of the machine, without disturbance to any of its known and wonted sequences. The hand of God may have been stretched forth to heal or to destroy—yet the eye of man, to the uttermost stretch of his observation, may have seen nothing but nature walking in her established courses, and never once appearing to falter from the regularity of her march. As far as the cognizance of the physician extends, it may be altogether a system of general laws, or of successions which are invariable—from the remotest antecedent which he has been able to trace, down to that ultimate or actual consequent which is immediately before his view. But beyond that antecedent there are recesses which he never has explored—and there, may the unseen and presiding agency of God be originating all those processes, of which the philosopher sees nothing but the uniformity of the closing footsteps. It is thence He may answer prayer; and, however proud science shall despise the affirmation, there is nought in all the laws and sequences that she has ever ascertained, by which she can disprove it.

26. But the most interesting application of this whole argument, is to the laws and sequences of the mental world. There is not perhaps a prayer which ascends more frequently to Heaven, than that which has for its object a right and desirable state of mind—whether the state prayed for be an intellectual or a moral or a religious one. Beside being the natural effusion of a mind in earnest for the good of its Eternity, there are many scriptural examples of such prayer—as of this for a right intellectual state, "Open thou mine eyes that I

may behold the wondrous things contained in thy law."—Or of this for a right moral state, "Uphold my goings in thy paths that my footsteps slip not."—Or of this for a right spiritual state, "Create a clean heart and renew a right spirit within me." Meanwhile mind as well as matter has its laws, its regular succession of antecedents and consequents, its trains of phenomena dependent the one upon the other by the relation of invariableness. There is room and subject for a philosophy in this department as well as in others—but without a resemblance in the objects and a constancy in the order of events there could be no philosophy. And accordingly on this field of investigation, too, we have our principles and laws—the laws of suggestion—the laws of emotion—the reciprocal influences which, by means of the faculty of attention, obtain between the understanding and the will—and many other processes whether of feeling or of thought, which, in virtue of their uniformity alone admit of classification, or in other words, admit of being philosophized. Now, what we affirm of this example, and perhaps with greater confidence than in any of the former ones, is the perfect consistency which obtains between the rigid uniformity of these various successions and the efficacy of prayer. A few steps anterior to the final result we can trace, and may find that they follow each other in their accustomed order without anomaly and without variation. But one step higher; and we come to the antecedent within the veil—which invisible itself, may be overruled by an immediate hand, and yet overrule the whole of that visible succession which

emerges from it without one law of the mental philosophy being violated. The response is given at a place beyond the cognizance of philosophy—at a place whence may issue forth to their accomplishment the mandates of divine power, yet without infringement on the certainties of human experience. If a miracle imply the violation of a known sequence in nature, then, what have been called the miracles of grace, may in effect be achieved, and yet not have been achieved miraculously.

27. We may observe that if prayer be of any effect at all in the obvious and natural meaning of it—that is, if a special and definite request ever obtain a special and definite fulfilment, there is a high expediency concerned in the fulfilment being so made good, as that the regularities of nature shall not be infringed upon. We, in this way, secure the greatest practical advantage that lies in a system of general laws. Without such a system, we should have no benefit from the lessons of experience. It is just because of the constancy which obtains among nature's sequences, that when certain antecedents are presented to observation, we anticipate with confidence that certain consequents and no others shall follow. It is thus and thus alone, in fact, that our recollections of the past become available for the guidance of the future; or that science and wisdom come to be founded on the informations of experience. But for this purpose, it is enough that there shall be no intromission with nature's *visible* sequences—or that the constancy of these shall be kept inviolate, not only as far as the eye of unwary and superficial observation can

extend, but also as far as the searching eye of philosophy can penetrate. It is not indispensable then to the stability of our experience, that all interpositions shall be banished from the economy of creation. It is only required that these interpositions shall be made among the inscrutable recesses which are behind the curtain, and not among the palpable events or evolutions which are before it. We in this way make good a harmony between the voice of experience when it proclaims the regularity of visible nature, and the voice of revelation when it proclaims the efficacy of prayer. We reconcile dependence on the constancy of nature, with dependence on the kindness and the help of nature's God. It is a precious blessing that, in the antecedents that are actually before our eyes, we can read the indications of futurity. But it is a blessing still more precious that, by means of other antecedents, the Deity can direct or modify or overrule the former ones, and that He is a Deity accessible to our prayers. And so philosophy may be made to meet and be at one with piety. Each of these schools has its distinct but not its discordant lessons. The same man may be a learner at both; and the fruit of his proficiency may be, that he blends the anticipations of experience with the hopes and the exercises of religion. He lives as if under the canopy of a special providence, even on that platform of sensible things where all the trains and successions are invariable. He feels, at one and the same time, that he is under the care of a presiding God and among the regularities of a harmonious Universe.

28. But while we thus argue that by an operation behind the scenes, Prayer may be responded to without infringement on the visible sequences of nature, we will not affirm what the specific operation actually is. We may clearly see that there are several ways by which this can be brought about; and yet we may not be able to pronounce upno the one way. One might conceive it to be done by the ministry of angels. Another may imagine that the effect of prayer on some hidden term of that progression which has led to the wished for result may itself be, as much as any other, one of the regular sequences of nature; and, certainly, prior to experience, is not more mysterious or unlikely than the effect which a particle of matter has on the most distant matter of our Universe. Another may contend for the direct intervention of a fiat from the court of Heaven's Sovereignty—whose first influence is on some occult antecedent in the upper places of the train, and whose subsequent influences descend in regular order, perhaps through many visible steps to the final accomplishment. And lastly, the taste of some may incline them to a pre-established harmony, as if the same God who foresaw every prayer, included every answer to these prayers in His primary adjustment of the great Mundane System.* We do not affirm

* The author of the Natural History of Enthusiasm, in his chapter on the enthusiastic abuses of the doctrine of a particular providence, advances an hypothesis distinct from all these, and which certainly has peculiar recommendations of its own. His conception is that the history of nature and of society is made up of innumerable progressions, in lines which perpetually cross each other; and which at their point of intersection receive a new

our preference for any of these suppositions; and we are not called upon to do so. We are engaged with one objection to the efficacy of prayer grounded on the constancy of nature's successions, as far as they are visible. We hold this to be effectually met by the consideration of there being one or two or any indefinite number of methods, whereby a reconciliation may be made between this doctrine of faith and the phenomena of experience. This, in all good logic, is enough for the question between us and our adversaries. A thousand possibilities do not warrant a specific or positive assertion on our side. But one possibility is of equivalent power to displace and nullify the objection on their side. We could not, without the transgression of sound philosophy, select the one which is certain out of

direction, in virtue of the lateral impulse that has come upon them. When an individual receives an answer to his prayer, the interposition might be made not in the line which he himself is describing, but in one of those which are to meet him on his path; and at a point therefore, where even though the visible constancy of nature should have been violated, yet, as being at the time beyond the sphere of his observation, it is a violation not visible to him. In one respect this hypothesis has an advantage over the one which we have ventured to propose. In ours the interposition, as being made at an anterior place in the scale of causation, might require at times to be made, not in answer to the prayer, but in the anticipation of it. By the other, the interposition, if made at however little a way from the point of junction, might be made both after the prayer and beyond the direct cognizance of the supplicant. This tallies better with our actual experience of those fulfilments, by which relief is often made to come to us from an unexpected quarter; and also with such declarations of Holy Writ as "God being a *very present* help in time of trouble." By either hypothesis the answer might be effectually made, but without any infringement on the constancy of nature noticeable by us; and so therefore as to leave inviolate, all the benefits of experience and the obligations of man to conform himself to its lessons.

the many which are conceivable. But it were a transgression greatly more violent, to affirm of the eternal and inscrutable Spirit who operates unseen through the mazes of His own workmanship, that He could not, in the infinity of His resources, devise a method by which both to uphold the visible uniformities of nature, and yet to meet and satisfy our Prayers.

29. We regret the length of this argument; but for the argument itself we make no apology. An ardent disciple warm from the schools of philosophy, and habituated to the investigation of nature's laws, acquires both a taste and an experience which would incline him to regard them as unalterable. Any intromission with the uniformity of these is most offensive to all his predilections; or perhaps is derided by him as a superstitious imagination. It has been arrogated as the glory of science, to have banished spectres from the universe—and, in a certain unqualified homage to the supremacy and unchangeableness of nature, the visions of the old mythology and the pieties of the Gospel of Jesus Christ have alike been put to scorn. Man figures himself, as if beset with the necessities of an unconscious mechanism, instead of walking through life under the observation and the care of a living governor. God may continue to be recognised—but more as a principle than as a person; and while His name is in our mouths, our hearts may be virtually in a state of atheism. He may still rank in our imaginations as the Supreme Power of the universe—the cause of causes—differing from them as the original does from its secon-

daries—but assimilated to them in being a physical rather than a moral agent, and as being alike insensible to our prayers and our offerings. It is thus that Philosophy may sometimes act with the power of a malignant genius, in withering from our souls the very essence and spirit of religion; and it is therefore of the more importance to assign the respective provinces of both. The one or philosophy, has for its domain the region of all the visible sequences in nature—and, save in the case of miracles, these events of exceeding rarity which we shall afterwards investigate, we most willingly concede that within the limits of this domain accessible to human eyes and human instruments, nature walks in a course that is inflexible. The other or religion, has for its province a transcendental region which lies beyond this, where there is room for all those influences which most effectually control the processes of nature, and yet never once cause that discoverable nature shall vacillate from her constancy. It is to the unseen power who presides over these supernal and unseen influences that man lifts up his prayer. He trenches not on the domain of philosophy—but, leaving her to observe and to classify all the sequences that are within her reach, he addresses himself to that Being who turns at His own pleasure the first term of every progression which science can investigate. By converse with his God he moves that which moves the universe.

30. There is a passage in the epistle to the Hebrews where it is said of God, that He maketh his angels spirits and his ministers a flame of fire;

or, as better translated by Campbell, that He maketh the winds His messengers and the flaming fire His ministers. What He could have done without the messenger and without the minister, He chooses to do by them—so that at that point, at least where the wind stands connected with its immediate consequent of a storm or a shipwreck, there is no miracle. Go back one step further in this series of causation. The wind could have been raised without the instrumentality of the vapour, or by it. But we further read of God that He causeth vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth—and, if done in this latter way, there has yet been no miracle. The vapour again may have been raised without the agency of heat or by it—and if in this process He have made the heat His servant, even as He maketh the flaming fire His servant—still in the intermediate chain between the last result and the bidding of the Almighty, we can detect no departure of visible nature from her wonted constancy; and still there has been no miracle. We have only to imagine of all the secondary causes visible to us, and intermediate between us and God—that, in no instance, does He act without them but by them; and then might there be many a special fulfilment to many a special request, yet without violence done to any of the observed regularities of nature. Let philosophy give all her strength to the investigation of these causes, let her succeed in tracing the progression upward along the ascending series by as many steps as the light of observation can carry her—she may widen thereby the domain of intel-

lect; but she will still leave beyond it a domain wide enough for all the hopes and aspirations of piety. It is enough for this that there remains an unknown interval between the last cause which philosophy has discovered, and the mysterious forthgoing of Him who has been termed the cause of causes—that every thing He does which is visible to human eyes shall be by the means of visible instruments—that the Creator shall act by creatures, each retaining the powers and properties which belong to it—so that every succession which wont to obtain between the observed antecedent and the observed consequent, shall still be upheld in the very order which philosophy has investigated, though every moment under the controlling hand of Him who as he gave birth, also gives movement and continuance to all things.

31. There is something more than a mere speculative adjustment concerned in this discussion—there is besides a lesson which pervades the whole business of religion, and which is more especially applicable to the guidance of all who are in earnest to be right. After having reconciled the special agency of God with the generality of all nature's observable laws, they will feel less difficulty in reconciling the utmost devotion in their hearts with the utmost diligence in their habits and in their history. They will perhaps now see how it is that performance the most strenuous does not supersede Prayer; and that Prayer the most confident or the most earnest does not supersede performance—that in fact we should do as laboriously as if the wished for result depended wholly on ourselves, and

should pray as humbly and as helplessly as if it depended wholly upon God. We should on the one hand regard Him as the efficacious sovereign at whose bidding each event springs into existence —for ushered in though it be, by a train of secondary causes, these causes are in His hand and the instruments of His pleasure; and therefore, observant of the lessons of piety, it is our part to pray. But we should on the other hand regulate our conduct on the constancy wherewith the secondary causes, after that they are put forth, proceed in wonted order from the first of them which is visible onward to the final result; and therefore, observant of the lessons of experience, it is our part to act. There is no opposition between faith in the supremacy of God and faith in the uniformity of visible nature. It is in the exercise of the one that we pray to Him who can order any fulfilment, along with the causes and circumstances by which it wont to be preceded. It is in the exercise of the other that we are led how to act under the existing causes, and in the actual circumstances by which we are surrounded. When we pray for a safe and successful voyage, we may look for a right eventual breeze —but we regulate the guidance and seamanship of the vessel by the actual breezes. When we pray for an abundant harvest, we may look for the favourable weather—but the whole work and management of the husbandry proceed upon the actual weather. When we pray for the recovery of health, we may look for symptoms of greater promise—but we submit to the treatment of the physician who prescribes to us on his experience

of the actual symptoms. And when we pray whether for the light of Christianity in our minds or for the love of Christianity in our hearts, we may look for the wished for fulfilment—but we are not to look for it in contravention to the known sequences of the mental philosophy. When the right faith is wrought in us—the wonted relation between evidence and belief is not dissolved, and we come to the faith not without evidence but by means of evidence; or in the act of seeking for it, of attending to it. When the right charity is wrought in us, the wonted relation between the object and its appropriate emotion is not dissolved—so that the emotion is felt in the act of looking to the object. When God shows us that which is good, this does not supersede the exercise on our part of proving all things, and then holding fast that which is good after that we have thus discovered it. In short all the mental processes, as far as we are able to trace them, might go on as usual, and without infringement on any of the known laws or sequences of human thought—though, at the head as it were of these sequences, there might be the application of a purifying and power-giving virtue by which the intellect is put into its best mood, and along with a greater clearness of mental vision, there might be imparted a greater susceptibility of the heart. This quickening touch might have place behind the ordinary processes, and which processes therefore are not to be dispensed with. They are intermediate in fact between the answer of the prayer and the final result or object of the prayer—so that the whole business of investigation is conducted as

before. Power may have been given, and yet not a power that works the effect without the ordinary procedure of the understanding and the heart; but works the effect by or through the ordinary procedure—making it valid now, when before it was impotent, towards the production of a right belief or a right sensibility or a right purpose.

32. The conclusion which we have now come to is in perfect harmony with the respective functions of the spirit and of the word. The one reveals truth to the mind—but it is only that truth and no other which is enveloped in the Bible. He opens the understanding—but it is to understand the Scriptures. The interposition of the Holy Spirit between a man and his Bible, no more makes palpable to him any other truths or characters than those which be literally graven there—than the interposition of the telescope between him and some distant shore, makes palpable other objects or other characters of scenery than those which be actually graven upon the landscape. And just as the telescope does not supersede the intense observations by the eye which looks through it over a field of nature, nay would not supersede the ordinary mathematics by which you might become acquainted with the positions and the bearings of its various objects—so neither does the light that cometh from the upper sanctuary over the field of revelation supersede the earnest direction of the mental eye towards it, or the busiest use of all those scientific expedients by which we obtain a more critical or a more systematic knowledge of its contents. It were an important speculation that we saw—but better

still, it were the highest practical wisdom that we proceeded on the consistency of these things. We might thus combine the wisdom of the letter with the wisdom of the spirit. For the one we must enter upon the study with the busy engagement of all our natural and acquired faculties—laboriously plying the lexicon and the commentary and all the arts and resources of scholarship. For the other we must pray.

33. That intervention of the Deity by which prayer is answered is in the first place effectual, and in the second out of sight—effectual, because made so as to influence some one term of the causal procession; out of sight, because made far enough back to be behind the furthest limit of our observation. It is thus that Philosophy might indefinitely widen her domain, yet without banishing God from the universe—which on the one hand might exhibit throughout the harmonies of a general system, and on the other be a theatre for all the minutest adaptations and fulfilments of a special providence. The two-fold lesson to be gathered from this contemplation is the utmost respect for experience, yet the utmost dependence of a reverential and child-like piety. It is the combination of these which we should labour to realize—for it is only by proceeding upon both, that we shall attain that rare but most inestimably precious union, the union of high scholarship with high sacredness. We have no right in the first instance to look for a miraculous reversal in our behalf of nature's processes—and therefore no right to aim at any given fulfilment but by nature's ordinary stepping-stones. Therefore, in the whole business of our mental

discipline, we should proceed on the certainty that the known sequences of the Mental Philosophy are never violated—that belief never comes but in the train of evidence—that knowledge never comes but by dint of converse and observation and reading and the busy exercise of all the intellectual faculties—that right affections never are upholden in the heart but in virtue of a sustained attention to the counterpart objects which are fitted to awaken them. We must proceed on these maxims of a sound experience in the study of our Bibles. We must betake ourselves to all the arts and the methods of ordinary scholarship. We must describe the very processes of criticism and of classification which are gone through in all similar investigations. In the course of this sustained and busy exercise, we may pass out of darkness into the marvellous light of the gospel—and yet it be impossible for the eye of the most subtle metaphysician to detect the violation of one sequence in the mental physiology, up to the farthest verge of all that we know of it. Yet beyond that verge there sitteth a power which, acting in the secret places of the machinery, controls the final result without deranging the wonted order of those palpable evolutions which go immediately before it. It is to Him we pray, that from the unseen fountain-head of influence He may guide and prosper the machine without disturbance to any of its visible harmonies. It is to a presiding touch from His omniscience that all the success is owing. The power and the glory are His—and yet the care and the pains-taking, the work and the labour of christian scholarship are all our own.

34. We must not expatiate too much on this topic—yet we like not to omit a remark that has often occurred to us on our Saviour's temptation. It would seem as if both the principles that we are now urging entered into the moral of this celebrated passage in his history. He *in opposition to experience* withstood the trial that would have seduced Him from His confidence in God—and on the maxim that man liveth not by bread alone but by every word that proceedeth out of God's mouth, He feared not the death which after so long privation all the sequences of nature and history pronounced to be inevitable. Yet in *respect for experience*, or rather for the established ordination of God, He would not, in compliance with another suggestion precipitate Himself from the pinnacle of the temple. He would not commit His body to such an antecedent as, according to all the similarities and sequences of bygone occurrence, must have involved its consequent destruction. There is finely blended in this exhibition the wisdom of experience with the wisdom of piety. We have no right so to count on a miracle in our favour, as wantonly to place ourselves in a condition which by all observation is one of danger or of certain calamity. Yet if so placed by a series of uncontrollable events, we ought still to trust with unshaken firmness in God. It is the part of sacred wisdom to be regardful of the evolutions of providence. It is the part of secular wisdom to be regardful of the notices of experience. There is a real harmony between them. The constancy of nature is that on which, in no circumstances, we should cease to proceed.

The protection of heaven is that for which in no circumstances we should cease to pray. It is on the former that all human industry turns—for what is the object of industry but to realize certain antecedents on which certain consequents might be expected to follow? It is on the latter that our devotion turns—and so labour supersedes not prayer, prayer supersedes not labour. They have always been the most influential men in the Church of Christ who like the apostle united both these—that is, the utmost diligence as if man did all, and the utmost dependence as if God did all.

35. Let us only remark in conclusion, that we shall find this principle to be of pervading importance in Theology. It runs in fact along that whole line of speculation, where lie the innumerable questions which respect the limits of the divine and the human agency, and so is of mighty interest both in the Dogmatic and the Moral or Practical Theology. The speculation may be difficult to adjust—but the practice or the habit is invaluable—of him who can both look intelligently around upon all that is visible, and look piously upward unto God.

CHAPTER IV.

On the Defects and the Uses of Natural Theology.

1. Natural Theology in the hands of some of its expounders has not had justice done to it; and this has aggravated the views of many respecting

its impotency and its blindness. The unwarrantable metaphysics which have been called to the aid of this high demonstration, have tended to obscure the reasoning both for the existence and the character of God.

2. We have already attempted to appreciate a style of demonstration respecting the divine existence, of which we can at least say that it has no efficacy with ourselves. And accordingly our decided preference is for the *a posteriori* to the *a priori* argument. Now the same style of demonstration has been applied with equal confidence to the topic of the divine attributes. In the works of Dr. Clarke and others, they are expounded synthetically, though he admits of the intelligence of God, that it cannot be properly and strictly demonstrated *a priori*. For this attribute, he does make appeal to the existing order and constitution of things—and after having based as it were one property or perfection of the Godhead on the evidence of observation, we do feel that though he resumes the synthetic process, he walks henceforth on a firmer ground-work, because of the stronger and more tangible material that is now incorporated with the reasoning. For example, that it is the property of the highest intelligence not only to employ the fittest means, but to select the best and worthiest ends—or, that a Being possessed of all power, being elevated above rivalship and fear, is exempted from every temptation to malice or envy, and so is exposed to no adverse influence which might else have hurt the entireness of His character as a Being possessed of all goodness—

these if not altogether resistless considerations, are at least more within the grasp of ordinary comprehension than certain anterior passages in his demonstrations of the attributes of God. But we cannot sympathize with his argument for the immensity of God, grounded on the consideration, that, if without contradiction He can be absent from one place, He may also without contradiction be absent from all places; and so not be a necessary or self-existent Being. He holds the same argument for the ubiquity of God, which he holds to be distinct from the former attribute—the one being the infinity of His immensity, and the other the infinity of His fulness. He argues even so too of the Unity of God, alleging that, "to suppose two (or more) distinct Beings existing of themselves necessarily and independent of each other, implies this plain contradiction; that each of them being independent of the other, they may either of them be supposed to exist alone, so that it will be no contradiction to imagine the other not to exist; and consequently neither of them will be necessarily existing." This will serve as a specimen. The whole tract of this *a priori* reasoning seems equally obscure, save at the place of transition which we have just referred to from the natural to the moral attributes.

3. The natural attributes of God are His Self-existence, His Eternity, His Omnipresence, His Unity, His Power, His Omniscience, His Wisdom. We prefer no charge against the views which are commonly given, in this department of Natural Theology, by the most approved writers. It is on

the moral attributes that we are most exposed to meagre and imperfect representations of the Deity. In regard to the natural attributes, it is on the basis of observed facts, of what we see and know of the actual universe that the demonstration of them mainly rests. But Dr. Thomas Brown, brief as he is on the Theistical department of his course—and slender like almost all his fellows as we hold him to be in the view which he entertains of God's moral characteristics, has comprised in the correct metaphysics of a few sentences which we shall now quote, all that we are desirous of impressing ere we proceed to a few remarks on the moral attributes, which are the justice and the truth and the righteousness and the holiness and the goodness of God.

4. "The manifest *order* of the universe, in the relation of parts to parts, and of their joint results to other joint results of other parts, is a proof then of some designing power, from which all this magnificent order took its rise; and the great Being, to whom, in discovering design, we ascribe the designing power, is the Being whom we denominate God. The harmony which is the proof of design, is itself a proof of the relative unity of that design. This designing power is *one* then, in the only sense in which we are entitled to speak either of divine unity or plurality, as indicated by the forms of nature before us,—for it is only from the phenomena of the universe, that we are capable of inferring the existence of any higher being whatever; and, therefore, as we have no traces of any other being, than the universe, directly or indirectly,

exhibits to us,—the designing power is not to our reason more than one; since in every thing which we behold, there is that unity of design, from which alone we have any reason to infer a designer. The laws of motion which prevail on our earth, prevail equally, wherever we are capable of discovering motion. On our own earth, where our observation is so ample, in the infinity of objects around us, there is no *irregularity* or opposition of contrivances, but all have proportions or analogies which mark them as the result of one harmonious design. There *may* be many spiritual beings of greater or less excellence, though there is no evidence of them in nature; for where there is no evidence whatever, it is as absurd to deny absolutely, as to affirm. But there is, as I have said, no evidence of any such beings; and the designing power then, as marked to us by all which we perceive in nature, is *one*, in the only sense in which the unity of the Supreme Being can be demonstrable or even at all conceivable by us. The power of which we speak, exists to our reason, only as the author of the design which we trace; and the design which we trace, various as it may be in the parts to which it extends, is all *one* harmonious contrivance.

"This *designing* unity, that is relative to *what we see*, is all, however, which we are logically entitled to infer from the phenomena; for the absolute and *necessary* unity of the Divine Power, as attempted to be proved by metaphysical arguments *a priori* that are at best only a laborious trifling with words, which either *signify* nothing or *prove* nothing, is more than, in our state of ignorance,

independently of revelation, we are entitled to assert. The unity, which alone, from the light of nature, we can with confidence assert, is hence not strictly exclusive, but wholly relative to that one design, which we are capable of tracing in the frame of the universe.

"This *one* designing power, we are accustomed to say, is omniscient, and, in the only sense in which that phrase can have any meaning, when used by creatures so ignorant as ourselves, to signify our impossibility of discovering any limits to the wisdom which formed the magnificent design of the world,—the phrase may be used, as expressive only of admiration, that is justly due to wisdom so sublime. He who formed the universe, and adapted it, in all its parts, for those gracious purposes, to which it is subservient, must, of course, have known the relations which he established; and knowing every relation of every thing existing, he may truly be said to be omniscient, in his relation to every thing which exists. But it is in this definite sense only, that the phrase has any meaning, as used by creatures, whose knowledge is itself so very limited. Beyond this universe, it is presumptuous for man to venture, even in the homage which he offers. The *absolute* wisdom of the Deity, transcendent as it may be, when compared, even with that noble display of it which is within us, and without us, wherever we turn our eyes, we are incapable even of conceiving; and admiring what we know, an awful veneration of what is unknown, is all that remains for us. Our only meaning of the term omniscience then, does

not arrogate to us, any knowledge of those infinite relations, which we assert the Deity to know. It is merely that the Supreme Being knows every relation of every existing thing—and that it is impossible for us to conceive any limit to his knowledge.

"His *omnipotence*, in like manner, *as conceived by us*, whatever it may be in *reality*, is not a power extending to circumstances, of which, from our own ignorance, we must be incapable of forming a conception; but a power which has produced whatever exists, and to which we cannot discover any limit. It may be capable of producing wonders, as far surpassing those which we perceive, as the whole fabric of the universe surpasses the little workmanship of mortal hands; but the relation of the Deity to these unexisting or unknown objects, is beyond the feebleness of our praise, as it is beyond the arrogance of our conception.

"God, then, the Author of the universe, exists. He exists, with a *wisdom*, which could comprehend every thing that fills infinity, in one great design, —with a *power*, which could fill infinity itself, with the splendid wonders that *are*, wherever we endeavour to extend our search. We know no *limit* to his *wisdom*, for all the knowledge which we are capable of acquiring, flows from *Him*, as from its source; we know *nothing* which can limit His power, for every thing of which we know the existence, is the work of His hand."—*Brown*, Vol. IV. p. 423—427.

5. That the proof of the moral rests on a distinct consideration from that of the natural attributes

may thus be made obvious. The adaptation of means to *an* end of itself demonstrates intelligence, and also power when the means are effectual. But to be satisfied that there is goodness in the adaptation, we must ascertain what the end particularly is, we must be presented with adaptation of means to *the* end. The proof both for intelligence and power may be as complete with one set of ends as with another set wholly opposite. There may be as thorough an impress of skill and energy on a machinery of torture, as on some bland and beneficent contrivance that operates a blessing throughout the sphere of its activity—on the structure, for example, of a serpent's envenomed tooth, as on the structure of those teeth which prepare the aliment for digestion, and subserve one of the most useful functions of the animal economy. It is thus that a wicked and malignant spirit could give decisive, but most terrible demonstration withal of his Natural Attributes—so that these on the one hand may be most strikingly and satisfactorily evinced, while the Moral Attributes on the other may be involved in the mystery of those contradictory appearances in nature, which the wisdom of man has so vainly endeavoured to unravel.

6. The adaptation of parts to *an* end might of itself demonstrate the intelligence and power of a creative mind—nor is it needed for this conclusion, that we should advert to what the end particularly is. This latter inquiry may lead to other conclusions. It may throw light on the moral attributes of the Creator. Adaptation for *an* end might indicate all the natural attributes—the power, the

skill, the unity, the Omnipresence of the Deity. Adaptation for *the* end might indicate Him to be a God either of benevolence or cruelty, a God of virtue or vice, a God who loved righteousness and hated iniquity, or a God who patronises the wicked and delights in thwarting and discouraging the good. So that after the natural attributes have been fully ascertained, the moral might still be in a state of deepest ambiguity. From adaptations alone, and without our adverting to the special object of them, we may gather the power and wisdom, and virtual presence of the Deity in all places of the Creation; and His complete intelligence of every thing that is going on through its mighty amplitudes; and even His Unity, as far as this can be gathered from unity of counsel; and last of all His Eternity, which is irresistibly obtruded upon us indeed by the consideration of the very simplest elements of thought. Thus it is that from adaptations in the general, we may be able to complete one list of the Divine perfections. But there is another list comprehending His goodness; His justice; His truth; His august and inviolable sacredness, or in other words, that instant and determined recoil from evil which hath affixed to Him the denomination of Holy. Now adaptation alone, or adaptation in the general, will not suffice to indicate these as the characteristics of Him who hath made and who rules the universe. To ascertain these, we must look to the objects of this varied adaptation. The skilful and effective adaptation of means to an end may indicate both power and wisdom—whether

the end be such as would minister complacency to a good or an evil Spirit—to one that delights in a world peopled with happiness and virtue, or to one that hath fiendish satisfaction in the agonies of a sentient creation and in the triumph and prevalence of wickedness over it. There may be refinements of most exquisite ingenuity, and the felt demonstration given of a power mighty and resistless, in the machinery of a system that is ever working off and by a multiplying process new and perpetual additions to the amount of disease and depravity and death. The subserviences even of a system like this might be enough to mark the utmost skill and the utmost energy on the part of its Author. In a word from the mere operation of the instruments which He hath formed, we may collect His natural attributes. But to fix our belief of His moral attributes, we must look to the result of that operation.

7. The untenable metaphysics which have been employed in demonstration of the being and natural attributes of God, have given to Natural Theology an aspect of mysticism which is not necessary and not natural to her. But this is not the whole of the injustice which she has received at the hand of her advocates. If she have been obscured by one style of reasoning in respect to the natural attributes of God, she has been weakened and made precarious by another style of argumentation in respect to His moral attributes; and the principal defect, as we have already hinted, lies in the confinement of the reasoning to fewer data than nature has actually set before us—to the pheno-

mena, and these viewed but partially of external nature, apart from the phenomena of our own moral nature or the lessons and the intimations of human conscience; and certain it is, that observations made on the outer field of society might of themselves afford a much greater amount of instruction, respecting the character of God, than many of our Theists have been inclined to draw from it—particularly those who would limit their attention to but one moral perfection of the Deity, and who expatiate on His benevolence alone. It is this which has, not only limited, but greatly weakened their conclusions. For on looking singly to the good and the evil of life we can infer the divine benevolence only from the balance of the former over the latter. But looking to that good and that evil in connexion with their moral causes, we can, not only more firmly establish the divine benevolence; but, in conjunction with this, elicit evidence of a very striking character for the righteousness of Him who is the Governor and Parent of the human family.*

8. When the good and the ill of life are looked to in themselves, and apart from the consideration of their moral causes, they seem wholly incapable of being turned to any theological conclusion which can be at all depended upon. For first it must be

* See a former chapter on the capacities of the world for making a virtuous species happy—the reasonings of which we do not repeat here—our only motive for reverting to the subject at all being to expose the precariousness of those views, which have reduced Natural Theology to a far more meagre and precarious system of doctrine than is suited to the real strength of its own proper and inherent evidences.

admitted that the joys of life are innumerable—and it were obviously an unconquerable task, should we attempt the description of them. Who can tell those countless diversities of pleasure, which are ministered by the eye and the ear and the other senses—or rather ministered to us by external objects through these various inlets of pleasurable sensation—and, if to these we add the pleasures of taste and affection and intellect, they altogether compose a vast amount and variety of happiness. In the utter impossibility of making a full or distinct enumeration of nature's joys—should we be required but to specify a few—then, at random and among the first which offer to our notice, might we instance the cheerfulness of light, and those manifold hues of loveliness into which it is broken and wherewith it is reflected from the face of our world—and then the glories of Nature's panorama, by every look at which there are souls of finer mould, that send forth a responding ecstasy upon the landscape. And to pass from this order of gratification to another yet higher in the scale, there are the delights of prosperous study—the calm but intense satisfaction wherewith the understanding imbibes of its proper aliment—the zest more particularly of the youthful mind now opening and advancing towards the maturity of its powers, as it hurries on from one perspective to another in the field of contemplation—the charm which none but scholars know, that lies in the march of successful inquiry; and that, not merely in the truths which are attained, but in the very train and exercise of the reasonings which lead to them. But as the philo-

sophers of our world are few, let us rather instance those joys and satisfactions which are accessible to all—and, laying aside those which depend upon sense, let us notice those which depend on the sympathies that reciprocate between man and man, whether in jovial companionship or in the serious and tender relations of domestic society. There is a felt and pleasurable glow even in those more distant exchanges of courtesy that, whether in the bustle of a market-place or along the streets of a crowded city, indicate the acting and reacting of good will between man and his fellows. But when this mutual attraction becomes more adhesive and peculiar—when it strengthens into friendship or love or the affinities of kindred—when from the hilarities of the social board, it passes upward to vows of constancy, or the services of faithful and devoted attachment—when the heart regales itself among the charities of home; and the soberness of age, and the sanguine buoyancy of youth, and the simplicity of sportive childhood, are all blended together under one parental roof into one delightful harmony—then it is that we are called to witness in one of its most blissful conditions, that humanity which has been made so exquisitely and so variously alive to blessedness. Indeed the whole imagery of family life is bright with the promises of enjoyment; and when to these we add the notices that break upon our observation from a more general and extended survey of human intercourse—such as the hearty gratulations of the festive party, and the songs of merry companionship, and these irrepressible gaieties of man responded to by the

frolic and gambols of the inferior creation—they all seem to indicate a world made for happiness—a scene of jubilee lighted up by the glorious luminary that is suspended over it—and in which we may at once see the beatitudes of our existing creation—the bounteousness of Him from whom it has sprung.

9. But over against this there is another enumeration to be made. There are the ills of life as well as its gratifications—and many are the theologians who have attempted to strike a balance between these rival elements. They have tried their arithmetic upon this question; and contend, not for the benevolence of God alone, but for the infinity of His benevolence, from the overplus of the good above the evil. It does not seem a very clear demonstration of this attribute—when thus made out, not by the absolute happiness of creation, but only by a difference—a difference of superiority, it is alleged, over its misery. One is apt to think that Infinite Power might have overruled all the tendencies to suffering on earth, so as to have maintained within its confines a full and unexcepted blessedness. In the phenomena of sentient nature, there is a perplexity which we fear cannot be extricated, by the mere consideration of Power and Goodness alone. Amid the vast capacities for enjoyment both of mind and of the external nature by which it is surrounded—there are the undoubted symptoms and the undoubted effects of a very sore distemper, over the whole of that sentient creation which is within the reach of our experience. We need not speak of that countenance of menace and boding disaster which

is put on by inanimate things—or, for the smile and the verdure and the gracefulness of nature in her happier moods, tell also of her angry tempests, of her wasteful volcanoes, of her sweeping hurricanes and floods, or of that dread thunder wherewith she overawes a prostrate world. It is enough faithfully to record the moral perversities wherewith the social state of man is vexed and agitated—the distrust and the selfishness and the busy competitions of pride or interest, which are constantly infusing of their gall into the whole business of human intercourse. We advert not merely to those outcries of resentment which might so often be heard on the broad and general face of society—but to those secret heart-burnings which fester in the bosom of families—the sad alienations that obtain under the same roof between those whose tastes and whose tempers are wholly uncongenial—the gloom, the discontent, the bitterness, that so mar those pictures of enchantment on which the sentimentalist loves to dwell; and by which the domestic retreat, that he would fondly liken to one of the bowers of Elysium, may in fact be peopled by the demoniacal passions of hatred, malice and revenge. At all events, the representation which, when we attend but to one set of elements looks so flattering and so fair, is sadly shaded or alternated by another set of elements now in busy and actual operation—so as to make of human life either a very prosaic or a very chequered story—and to prove that if there be materials within our reach whereof one might build a lovely and inviting paradise; there are other materials actually poured

forth upon our world, and which, had they been poured without mixture and without mitigation, would indeed have made of it a most dire and dreadful Pandemonium.

10. Now the puzzle is, how to clear our way to any definite or satisfactory conclusion, amid this warfare of good and evil—and what possibly to make of it, in our attempts to determine the character of Him who willed such an enigmatical world as ours into existence. It were indeed a most enigmatical world, did it offer nothing to our view from which to infer the moral character of God, but the mere balance of its pleasures and its pains. We should be utterly at a loss how to manage such a computation—nor, through the multitude and perplexity of its materials, could we find any clear or confident way by which to strike the numerical difference between the good and the evil. Even though the respective summations could be accurately made, still the question would invariably obtrude itself, why any evil at all? If we indeed live under the government of a God whose goodness and whose power are both perfect, why under such an economy should there be so much as the slightest taint or remainder of evil? Why is it that we have any balance between the opposite ingredients to adjust? The mere predominance of one of these ingredients will not satisfy a spirit that is exercised with difficulties because of the mere existence of the other ingredient. And even this predominance of good is so very questionable. How shall we proceed to take an inventory of all the beatitudes, and then of all

the banes of our earthly existence? By what arithmetic shall we settle the difference betwixt them—or where is the one argument that without any process of this sort will guide us at once to a right conclusion upon the subject? We are aware that the love of life has been employed for such an argument. But the love of life is not the fruit of any previous calculation on the worth of the commodity. It is an instinct; and there is in it we believe a great deal more of horror at the pains of that awful and unknown transition by which we are conducted away from it, than there is of regret at the privation of any or all put together of its affirmative joys. We think it must be quite palpable, that far the most noticeable, and therefore far the most vivid and powerful of those emotions which are connected with our view of death, is the recoil wherewith nature shrinks from its imagined agonies and terrors—and that such should be the agonies and terrors of every sentient creature who is capable of anticipation, and more particularly that all without exception who belong to the family of man should have to bear upon their spirits the burden of so dread a perspective, that their life should be exposed at every turn to the damping visitation of such a thought, or that the progress of their existence through the world should only be easy and tolerable by the steeping of all their senses in the utter forgetfulness of its sore and affecting termination—this surely marks a state, whence it were most difficult to infer the goodness of Him by whom it is originated. Nor when we look to the pain and the shrinking and

the breathlessness and the insufferable languor or sickness which mark the approach of the last messenger; or look to the hideous spectacle which he leaves after having fulfilled his errand, and consigned the once animated body to the loathsomeness of the grave—can we avoid remarking the total diversity which there is, between the rough lessons of experience, and the lessons of a poetic and sentimental Theism.

11. But while the good and the ill of life, regarded in no other light than as so much happiness on the one hand and so much misery on the other, seem wholly insufficient data for the determination even of one of the moral attributes—if viewed in connexion with their causes, as we have attempted to do in a preceding chapter, they furnish very strong probabilities both for the benevolence and the righteousness of God. Beside which we have a still stronger argument in the supremacy of conscience or of a moral sense in man, which goes far to prove Him a God who combines in His character all the virtues. Whatever an enlightened conscience deems to be right or, in other words, whatever the Creator has made the creature feel with entire and universal consent to be of paramount obligation, that we are led to regard as the expression and the evidence of a corresponding virtue in the divine nature. Else there is a dissonance between what we, in the exercise of our best and highest principles, feel to be virtuous, and the actual character of the Godhead—or He hath so fashioned us, that the supreme homage of that moral nature which Himself hath constituted must necessarily be given

to attributes of character which differ, or even to attributes which are opposite to His own. It is most unlikely that a God of falsehood would so mould and attemper the creatures of His own making, as that what themselves felt to be the superior principles of their nature should depone to the worth and excellence of truth, and so to the turpitude of the Being from whom they had sprung —or in like manner, that a God of cruelty should deposit within the hearts and the breasts of His own fabrication a similar attestation on the side of benevolence—or that a God of injustice should have done the same by uprightness and honesty. In spite of the aberrations of a watch, it is impossible to inspect its mechanism, and especially the presiding office of its regulator, without the conviction that its primary intention was for the measurement of time—and that to this object the aim of the artificer was supremely or rather solely directed. And it is equally impossible, whatever the aberrations of actual humanity may be, to inspect the moral nature of man, and take notice more especially of that presiding sense of obligation within us which attaches to our every feeling of what we ought to be or ought to do—without the conviction that this conscience was given as a power wherewith to control and overrule all the inferior propensities of our nature, and to secure for virtue that practical ascendancy which forms the healthy condition of our species. By reading then the natural tablet of morality in our own hearts, we read an impress as it were or reflection from that original tablet of all moral and spiritual excellence, even the cha-

racter of Him from whom we have emanated. The book of conscience may be regarded as a transcript by the hand of this Being from that primeval virtue which belongs essentially and eternally to Himself—and whatever lineament we discern there, is the evidence to us of a corresponding lineament in the image of the Godhead. It is thus that we read the moral character of God in the book of our own consciences. From what we find to be the constitution of our moral nature, we directly infer the mind and disposition of Him who framed it. It is true that there are certain local or accidental modifications, which have caused slight and occasional difference in the moral judgments of men. But whatever, apart and aloof from these, has been enthroned by the universal sense of mankind as a virtue, or as that which should have a dwelling-place on earth—announces itself through the organ of conscience to have had an eternal dwelling-place in Heaven—being seated there as one of the lovely or venerable characteristics of Him who framed us. If truth and purity and integrity and kindness be virtues in men, and are recognised by him as of supreme obligation—the very fact of man being so framed as thus to recognise them, is to us the strongest argument within the compass of our natural vision, for the truth and righteousness and goodness and holiness of God.

12. When Ethical Philosophers investigate the origin and foundation of our moral ideas—they sometimes, for the eliciting of principle, put imaginary cases—at one time disjoining, at another variously blending the elements of their speculation.

For instance they make the supposition of man being so constituted, that with a moral nature utterly the reverse of his present one, his moral judgments should be altogether opposite to those which he now passes on the virtues and vices of the human character. It is possible to conceive, and alike possible to argue on such a thing—on our species being so organized that what we now honour as righteous and incumbent moralities, we should then execrate as crimes, and what we now feel to be moral abominations, we should then revere as the best habits or accomplishments of humanity. The supposition however violent can certainly be made, that honour and generosity and truth should be proscribed by a race of beings so differently cast and moulded from ourselves as to associate blame or culpability with these observations; and, on the other hand, that deceit and murder and licentiousness should be canonized as so many virtues in the hearts of a thus regenerated species. We are all aware of the question whether virtue have a substantive and independent character of its own, or is a mere thing of arbitrary will and appointment on the part of Him who framed us—and it is in the management of this question, that the hypothesis which we now advert to has sometimes been put. Now of whatever avail it may be for determining an abstract question about the nature of virtue, it at least supplies us with an obvious argument for determining the moral character of God. Let the imagination be formed of a superior being, the creator of a planet which he peopled with creatures of his own making—

and the whole mechanism of whose moral judgments was the reverse of ours—insomuch that they gave obeisance not of their lower but of their higher faculties, nay of conscience the highest of all, to what in our estimation are the worst atrocities of human guilt. Let but the vices of our world be deified into virtues there—and what should be the inference in regard to the character of him who was the maker of such a world, and of such a world's family? From a law written in the heart so different from our own, should we not infer a lawgiver equally different from our own? Should our existing decalogue have proceeded from God, it bespeaks a Sovereign who is the enemy of all falsehood and rapacity and violence. But another decalogue, the reverse of this in all its enactments, would have bespoke a sovereign the enemy of all that we are taught at present to revere as good, the friend and patron of all that we are taught to abhor as evil. Now the argument is the same, whether the enactments be written on a tablet of jurisprudence or on the tablet of our moral nature. A law of conscience opposite to the actual law would have indicated an opposite moral character in Him who framed us—just as much as would the law of an authoritative code, proclaimed by revelation from Heaven, if opposite in all its commandments to the law of Sinai. In other words, had our species from the constitution given to them rendered their moral acknowledgments to vice, we should have inferred the author of such a constitution to have been a God of wickedness—a sound inference truly—but not

more sound than the conclusion we now make of what God actually is from the conscience he has actually given to us—a conscience that, amid all the obstructions and obscurations of the inferior faculties in a nature which has gone into unhingement, speaks loudly for the obligations and against the transgressions of moral rectitude—and therefore for a God who, amid the anarchy of the lower elements in this lower world, still asserts with overruling voice that He loveth righteousness, that He hateth iniquity.

13. Let us here take the opportunity of explaining a term which occurs but rarely in any of the expositions of Natural Theology—we mean the Holiness of the Godhead. This is sometimes conceived of merely as Virtue in its highest possible state of exaltation. But this is not just the appropriate definition of it. It is not Virtue in itself —but virtue in relation to its opposite. The term Holiness suggests the idea not of perfect Virtue—but of that peculiar affection wherewith a Being of perfect virtue regards moral Evil—and so much indeed is this the precise and characteristic import of the term, that, had there been no evil either actual or conceivable in the Universe, there could have been no Holiness. There would have been perfect Truth and perfect Righteousness—yet not Holiness—for this is a word which denotes neither any one of the Virtues in particular, nor the assemblage of them all put together—but the recoil or the repulsion of these towards the opposite vices —a recoil that never could have been felt, if Vice had been so far a nonentity as to be neither an

object of real existence nor an object of thought. It is thus that the peculiar quality of Holiness, instead of a separate or additional attribute in God's moral nature, may be regarded as a peculiar modification of that nature which extends to all its attributes—marking the strength of their repugnance to their respective opposites, and by this very strength indicating if we may so express it, that force of character which belongs to Him. For such is the Holiness of God, that He not only doeth no evil—but evil cannot dwell in His presence. Such is the Holiness of God, that He not only committeth no iniquity—but He is of purer eyes than to behold it without abhorrence. Such is the Holiness of God that He not only doth not lie—but He cannot lie, so that heaven and earth must pass away ere any of His words can pass away. Holiness is not Virtue—but virtue under a peculiar aspect, the aspect of its antipathy to Vice—and in effect of which, it so resolutely shrinks from all contact and contamination of its opposite. It is not by a mere statement or description of any of the virtues in God that the impression of His holiness is given. These virtues must be viewed in relation to moral Evil—and by their Holiness we understand the moral impossibility of their fellowship therewith. It is a term expressive of strict and guarded separation—just as the vessels of the temple were called holy, because set apart from all common uses, and that by a law the violation of which would have been sacrilege. And such too is the impression of Heaven's high sacredness—not a feeling of our sensitive, but the deeply seated feel-

ing of our moral and rational nature. Though little owned by poetical religionists, it has an undoubted echo in every conscience, whose paramount and peremptory voice within the heart is felt to proceed from a Being who is intolerant of evil and who resents its approach as profanation. It is this uncompromising purity of God which in the eye of the awakened sinner makes Him so tremendous —so that he views Him as a God of unappeased if not of unappeasable jealousy, and feels checked from advancing towards Him with the apprehension that should He offer to draw nigh, fire would come forth of the sanctuary to burn up and to destroy. It is at this passage we conceive in Natural Theology, that it becomes the germ of great and high preparations—for precisely on our slight or our lofty apprehension of God as a judge, of God as a righteous sovereign and lawgiver—will it depend whether Christianity shall be hailed as a Saviour, or be neglected and turned from as a thing of nought.

14. Natural Theology is often spoken of as a useless thing, because of its defective evidence—but on this subject we should not forget the distinction between the ethics of the Science and the objects of the Science. There is an obscurity which, in various degrees, may rest upon the latter; and yet that be an obscurity wherewith the former is not at all chargeable. Let the objects of Theology be shrouded as they may—that does not hinder the ethics of Theology from being promptly and vividly seen by us in the light of intuition. Even although the very being of a God should require an inferential process ere we have ascertained it

—the duty we owe to God, on the supposition of his being is clearly and immediately apprehended by the mind. This evidence for the one is as distinct from that for the other, as the evidence of moral is distinct from that of historical truth. The question, what are the actually existent things whether in the spiritual or in the material world—is *toto cœlo* different from the question which presupposes the existence of the things, and simply confines itself to the relations between them. We have a mathematics which determine the action and reaction that take place between our earth and the various bodies in the firmament; and which mathematics would have been alike available to the same conclusion—although there had been no planets, and none of those facts which form the materials of our actual astronomy. We have a morals which determine the relative obligations which subsist between the creature and the Creator to whom he owes his birth and preservation; and what is purely ethical in the principle can neither be more illustrated nor more obscured by the brighter or the fainter evidence for an existing Deity. The mathematical is not more distinct from the observational truth in physics, than the moral is from the observational truth in theology. So that when we hear of the dimness of Nature's light; and how imperfectly it is that the things of God can be apprehended by man—we should distinguish between the things which differ—for, however we may have to grope our way to the substantive truths of theology, no sooner is a God made known, than the incumbent gratitude and the incumbent obedience are

forthwith recognised as the instant suggestions of our moral nature.

15. Even then when the objects of theology lie under their envelopment of deepest obscuration, there is a clear and imperative call addressed to us from the ethics of theology. And it is obvious that the call becomes louder—the more that this obscuration is dissipated, or the further that we proceed successfully in our inquiries after God. Neither for this purpose is it at all indispensable to form a previous estimate of the strength or the evidence of Natural Theology. Practically, the stronger it is and the clearer it is, it will speak all the more imperatively to the obligation of our respectfully entertaining every proposal that wears even but the likelihood of having come to us from the upper sanctuary. However profound the haze may be which rests on the objects of theology, its ethics remain so far distinct that the ethical principle which we have tried to unfold still keeps its ground—and there is no state or period of the mind too far back, as it were, for being reached by its most righteous challenge, that we should stir ourselves up to lay hold of God. There is a duty which we owe to a certain, but there is also a duty which we owe to a likely, nay even a possible Deity. Whenever the spirit of man is visited by even so little as but the thought of a Maker, it is a thought which should solemnize, which should fix, which should engage him in the prosecution of an active search after this unknown Benefactor, and should lead him to catch as it were at every promise however faint of a further intelligence

respecting His character and ways. There was a moral obligation on the part of the Athenians to listen to Paul, when he spoke to them of the unknown God. And it is an obligation which extends from the most refined to the rudest of Nature's children. All humanity lies within the circle of it. And though the light of Nature glimmers more feebly towards the outskirts of the species—yet even there, its dimness is visible to the last of men, and should reclaim them to seriousness. There is an incipient voice heard even in the extreme parts of the earth, and which goes to the very root and embryo of religion. It is a call upon man's attention—not perhaps to inform but to awaken him.—He obeys this call who places himself on the outlook for any traces or manifestations of a God. The missionary who lands upon his shore will find him the first to listen to his message—at least the first to be impressed by its aspect of honesty and sacredness.

16. The principle which we now labour to impress might be made to subserve the vindication of a missionary enterprise—but our most direct interest in it is founded on its home application to the most unlettered of our own peasantry. It is of mighty use that there should be initial ground upon which we can obtain firm entry for our ministrations among the ignorant—that as the church bell is the summons upon their attendance, there should be a moral summons upon the attention of the people. Now this is the important function of their Natural Theology — the theology of conscience which challenges supremacy within them, and gives the impression of a supreme Judge and Ruler over

them. It is the existence of this impression which secures an introduction for us. There is at the very least the conception of a God—and, however obscure the conception may be, there is a felt clearness and certainty in the principle that a profest message from Him, unless it palpably belies itself, is not to be disregarded. The former may be obscure as belonging to the objects of Theology —while the latter is not so as belonging to the ethics of Theology. This ethical principle in fact, felt and recognised wherever there is a conscience or a moral nature, is the hold whereby the fishers of men may reclaim them from the lowest depths whether of ignorance or depravity. It is surely of importance to know that the process of Christianization has a clear outset in the moral and rational principles of our nature—and that there is a natural theology among the people which may serve as a harbinger for the higher lessons of the gospel. It is by this natural theology of theirs that the first steps of the process are made good —that a hearing is gained, and attention is drawn to the verisimilitudes of the Christian Revelation. It is by the evidence of the gospel itself that these verisimilitudes brighten into verities. It is natural theology which accomplishes the first—it is the proper evidence of Christianity which accomplishes the second part of the process. But mainly it is the internal evidence. The great majority of our people have no access to the other. They are strangers to all that scholarship and criticism and historical investigation, which serve to illustrate the outward credentials of the book. But they

need be no strangers to the contents of the book —and we will not anticipate how it is that they discern the signatures of a divinity there—or how from the simple apparatus of a bible and a conscience, that light is struck out which guides the peasant safely to Heaven. It is saying much for the importance of natural theology that it does contribute to a result so glorious—nor let us longer speak of nature's light as if it had gone into utter extinction—when in fact the two great instrumental causes for the Christianity of all our cottages, are the light of nature and the self-evidencing power of the Bible.

17. Having said thus much for Natural Theology, we feel the less hesitation in admitting that it does leave us in difficulties from which itself cannot extricate us. But it is well that it makes discovery of these. It gives us to know our disease—and therefore prompts us to cast about for a remedy. It manifests the fearful dilemma in which we are placed; and so inclines us to hail every symptom or promise of deliverance therefrom. Whatever be the darkness of our spirits in regard to God as an object, there natively belongs to us enough of the ethical to feel, that we have not done what we ought by this unknown God. There is a light of conscience by which we can apprehend what sin is. There is a light of consciousness by which we can know ourselves to be sinners; and thus it is that every man is placed in a state of recipiency for the overtures of the Christian Revelation. It is enough for this, though without entering very

strictly or specifically upon the question, if he but share however generally in nature's perplexities; in her undefined terrors, and these strangely blended with her vague and uncertain hopes; in her unresolved doubts, her longing yet fruitless aspirations.

18. We have already observed the difficulty to which natural theism is put in accounting for the ills of life—and by availing ourselves of the undoubted fact, that mainly they are reducible into moral causes, we have certainly approximated at least to the right interpretation of them. The most appalling of all these in our mysterious world is the mystery of death. Even although it could be made out, that there is here a triumphant superiority of happiness to misery—this, instead of bringing an explanation to the difficulty, would in fact bring a difficulty to the explanation. Let the few little years of our pilgrimage have been as bright and as beautiful as they may—still what account is to be given of that universal plague, wherewith all that ever breathes on the face of our earth hath been so hopelessly and incurably infected? Of what avail are the smile and the sunshine of our ephemeral being, when they only serve to aggravate its closing horrors; and to give a more revolting hideousness to that desolation, by which it is so fearfully ended? Let the picture of all those joys which gladden the family circle be rendered as touching as it may—it is death, it is universal and unsparing death, which turns it all to cruelest mockery. Even though without one other ingredient to embitter the cup of life, this

fatality alone were enough utterly to change the aspect of our world—from a pleasing habitation for the sons of men, transforming it into the vast sepulchral abode of its mouldering generations.

19. But this is reasoning on a supposition the most favourable. It is presuming that, apart from death, all within us and about us is in the very heyday of happiness. But really it is not so. It is evident that Nature labours under a sore distemper—and whereof she hath given palpable symptoms, not only in the volcano and the earthquake and the storm—but in that general conspiracy of all her elements, against which man hath to fight and to fatigue himself his whole life long—that he might force out a subsistence, and keep footing through a history, which is made up of little better than to drudge and to die. Should we try to unriddle the mystery, we would state it as one of the likeliest solutions—that she was at one time healthful and entire, but that a universal blight had come upon her, and she hath now become the wreck of what she was—still lovely in many of her aspects, though in sore distress—still majestic and venerable, though a venerable ruin —appearing as if out of joint; and giving token by her extended deserts, and the gloom of her unpeopled solitudes, and her wintry frown, and her many fears and fitful agitations, that some mysterious ailment hath befallen her.

20. There is we think an utter derangement into which nature has been thrown—so that all her elements are impregnated with disease; and often the hurricane, and pestilence, and sweeping

flood, become the ministers of desolation. Even mute and inanimate things are subject to the power of a decay—under which many of them, and these the loveliest in nature, do sicken and expire —and so exemplify that death which likens them to those who are immediately above themselves in the scale of creation. The inferior animals too are all under the law of mortality—and not a few of them under that law of their sentient and organic nature by which, in obedience to a tyrant appetite, they go forth upon each other in mutual fierceness to raven and to destroy. And with man also, the seeds of mortality are in his tainted constitution—they are born with him—and they lie undeveloped, and sleep in mysterious embryo among the curious receptacles of an infant bosom. Throughout all her domains, in short, Nature hath taken on a hue of sickliness—and the very elements are charged with disease—and even that ground which might have offered a soft and flowery carpet, for the impress of ethereal footsteps, hath gathered into a rugged and intractable temper—and more especially man, has been doomed by the very nobleness of his endowments, by the greater reach of his forebodings and the finer sensibilities that belong to him, to a larger participation, to a higher pre-eminence in the general distress.

21. There is one alleviation, and an alleviation felt even in bosoms where the light of revelation hath not entered. There is the mingling of a strange undefinable hope with all this helplessness. There is a sort of vague undefinable impression, we think, upon all spirits, of some great evolution

of the present system under which we live—some looking towards, as well as longing after immortality—some mysterious but yet powerful sense within every breast, of the present as a state of confinement and thraldom, and that yet a day of light and largeness and liberty is coming. We cannot imagine of those who live without the scope of Christianity, that they have any very precise or perhaps confident anticipations on the subject. But certainly there is abroad even among them a dim and a distant vision of better days, of a brighter and a blander period that is now obscurely seen or guessed at through the gloom by which humanity is encompassed—a kind of floating anticipation, suggested perhaps by the experimental feeling that there is now the straitness of an opprest and limited condition, and that we are still among the toils and the difficulties and the struggles of an embryo state of existence. It is altogether worthy of remark, that, in like manner as throughout the various countries of the world there is the very wide impression of a primeval condition of virtue and blessedness from which we have fallen—so there seems a very wide expectation of the species being at length restored to the honours of their original excellence, and the world being recovered to the same health and harmony and loveliness as before. The vision of a golden age at some remote period of antiquity, is not unaccompanied by the vision of a yet splendid and general revival of all things. Even apart from revelation, there floats before the world's eye the brilliant perspective of this earth being at length covered with a righteous and

regenerated family. This is a topic on which even philosophy has her fascinating dreams; and there are philanthropists in our day who disown Christianity, yet are urged forward to exertion by the power and the pleasure of an anticipation so beautiful. They do not think of death. They only think of the moral and political glories of a renovated world, and of these glories as unfading. It is an immortality after all that they are picturing. While they look on that gospel which brought life and immortality to light as a fable, still they find that the whole capacity of their spirits is not filled, unless they can regale them with the prospect of an immortality of their own. Nothing short of this will satisfy them—and whether we look to those who speculate on the perfectibility of mankind, or to those who think in economic theories that they are laying a basis on which might be reared the permanent happiness of nations, we see but man spurning at the narrowness of his present condition, and waiting in earnest expectancy for a nobler manifestation.

22. Still death forms the most grievous deduction from the entireness of that world, which is so often appealed to as containing in it ample evidences for the goodness of God. It is this which stamps the character of vanity of vanities on all who are subject to it. Through the whole of life man walketh in a vain show and vexeth himself in vain —and though it had flowed in one clear and untroubled current of felicity, how surely and how sadly it wanes onward to its close. It is death which puts impressive mockery on all the splendour

and fulness of this world. The grave absorbs all, annihilates all—and as one generation maketh room for another, and the men of the present age are borne off by the men of the age that is to follow, we cannot but regard the history of our species, and indeed of all the living tribes that people the surface of this labouring earth, we cannot but regard it in any other light than as a series of abortions. There is so much of the promise of immortality in the high anticipation and heyday of youth—there is so much of the seeming power of immortality in the vigour of established manhood—there is even so much of the character of endurance in the tenacity wherewith age keeps itself rivetted to the pursuits and interests of the world, to its busy schemes and its eager prosecutions and its castles of fame or accumulated fortune—clinging as it does to these things, even on the very brink of the sepulchre, and keeping a firmer hold with the hand of avarice, the sooner that its deeds and its documents and its various parchments of security are to be torn away from it—why the whole looks so farcical, if we may be allowed the term, that well may it be said of life even in its happiest guise, and in midst of its gayest prosperity, that it is altogether subject to vanity.

23. But, as we have already said, there is with all this actual and undoubted helplessness, there is strangely and mysteriously mixed up a kind of vague aspiration or hope in the heart of men after some coming enlargement. The very thirst after immortal fame on the part of orators and philosophers and poets is an example of it—and so are

the magnificent sketches of a prouder and better day for our species that float before the eye of our sanguine economists—and so is every effort to shake off the trammels of antiquity, and to speed if possible with an innovator's hand the amelioration of our race—and so are those lovely visions of a world regenerated into benevolence and purity and peace that certain uninspired prophets love to gaze upon. Each hath a millennium of his own on which he doats and dwells with kindred imagination; and whether we read of the future triumph of virtue by the march of intellect, or are called to look upon it in the perspective of planned and regulated villages—it may well be put down to the craving appetite, or even the strong expectancy that there is in human bosoms, for some bright and beauteous evolution in the history of human affairs.

24. Take these two elements—the actual state of man, and yet the high anticipations that even in spite of death are found to lighten and elevate his bosom—and we should figure the world to be in a state of big and general distress, giving token of some pregnant but yet undisclosed mystery wherewith it is charged, and heaving throughout all its borders with the pains and the portents of its coming regeneration.

25. This seems to be the general aspect of things. The world is not at ease. The element wherein it floats is far from being of a tranquil or a rejoicing character. It hath somehow got out of adjustment, and is evidently off the poise or the balance of those equable movements in which

we should desire that it persisted for ever. Like the stray member of a secure and blissful family, it hath turned into a wayward comfortless ill-conditioned thing, that still teems however with the recollection of its high original, and wildly gleams and gladdens in the hope of its coming regeneration. It hath all the characters now of being in a transition state—and with all those symptoms of restlessness about it which brooding insect undergoes ere it passes into the death-like chrysalis, and comes forth again in some gay and beauteous expansion on the fields of our illumined atmosphere. Meanwhile it is in sore labour; and the tempest's sigh, and the meteor's flash, and not more the elemental war than the conflict and the agony that are upon all spirits—the vexing care, and the heated enterprise, and the fierce contention, and the battle-cry both that rises among the inferior tribes throughout the amplitudes of unpeopled nature, and that breaks as loudly upon the ear from the shock of civilized men—above every thing the death, the sweeping irresistible death, that makes such havoc among all the ranks of animated nature and carries off as with a flood its successive generations—these are the now overhanging evils of a world that is groping in darkness for its God.

26. There are certain topics in Natural Theology which we would rather pass over in this rapid and cursory way, than bring them each successively forward, in the shape of a distinct and definite argument. We conceive that injury is done to a cause, when the stress of it is laid in any great or

ostentatious degree on that which is merely conjectural. There has been too much made of what may be called the surmisings or the longings or the presentiments of nature. For example we should hesitate to urge either nature's dread of annihilation, or its desire of posthumous fame (that is of a species of life, because of living in the recollection of yet unborn generations) or its towering wishes and capacities beyond all which earth and time can satisfy—we should not very anxiously expound, or very confidently insist on these as reasons for immortality—not but they have some force when viewed in analogy with the general fact that for each appetency in man whether mental or corporeal, there is a definite object in external nature—so that it seems to exhibit the anomaly of what may be called a waste feeling or a waste faculty in our constitution, should there be a heaving of the soul towards eternity without an actual eternity to meet and to satisfy its aspirations. Still we would view these things, not in the light of substantial proofs, but rather of slender presumptions. They are not manifestations of the truth—but to make use of a homely yet expressive term peculiar we believe to Scotland—they are but *inklings* of the truth. Now we hold that natural theology abounds in such faint and distant notices, as may very aptly be denominated *inklings*. And if we have at all succeeded in conveying our sense of the worth and magnitude of a principle which we have much insisted on, they are very far from being destitute of practical importance. They may not challenge the belief—and yet most rightfully may they

challenge the attention. They are not enough to produce conviction—but they should be enough to prompt and to stimulate inquiry. They do not unveil the objective truth—but they bring the ethical principle into play. They do not bring light to the spirit—but they bring to the test its love for the light or its love for the darkness. They do not form the materials of such a proof as should carry the assurance of the mind, but they at least form the materials of such a precognition as should set it on a busy and desirous search after its own immortality; and make it hail the arrival from whatever quarter of any offered manifestations. There is not as much light in the theology of nature as should satisfy and inform the spirit of man—but certainly as much as should utterly condemn the spirit's lethargy. It cannot fetch down the secret of heaven's economy to earth —but it puts the earth into a state of ripeness and respondency for heaven's revelation.

27. Perhaps the first tendency of the youthful spirit, is to ascribe a sufficiency and a strength to Natural Theology which do not belong to it. It is at this period that the mere plausibilities of the subject are most likely to be sustained as proofs—and that such agreeable reasonings as those of Addison in his Spectator, about the aspiring and the indefinite capacities of progress in man, will be held enough to warrant our confident expectation of immortality. But after that we have entered on a severe discipline of thought, and have exchanged the imaginative for the experimental or the historical—we are apt to discard the specula-

tions of natural theism altogether, and to rest our exclusive as well as firm belief on the foundation of that sound testimony which gives the force of observational evidence to the statements and revelations of the gospel.

28. The true apprehension seems to be that Natural Theology, however little to be trusted as an informer, yet as an inquirer, or rather as a prompter to inquiry, is of inestimable service. It is a high function that she discharges, for though not able to satisfy the search, she impels to the search. We are apt to undervalue, if not to set her aside altogether, when we compare her obscure and imperfect notices with the lustre and the fulness of revelation. But this is because we overlook the virtue that lies in the probabilities of a subject—a virtue, either, on the one hand, to fasten the attention; or, on the other hand, to condemn the want of it. This we hold to be the precise office of natural theology—and an office too, which she performs, not merely as the theology of science among those who listen to her demonstrations in the academic hall; but which she also performs with powerful and practical effect, as the theology of conscience, throughout all the classes of our general population. It is this initial work which makes her so useful, we should say so indispensable, as a preliminary to the gospel. Natural theology is quite overrated by those who would represent it as the foundation of the edifice. It is not that, but rather the taper by which we must grope our way to the edifice. The stability of a fabric is not greater than the stability of that upon which it rests;

and it were ascribing a general infirmity to revelation, to set it forth, as leaning upon natural theism, in the way that a mathematical doctrine leans upon the axioms or first principles of the science. Christianity rests on its own proper evidence; and if, instead of this, she be made to rest on an antecedent natural religion, she becomes weak throughout, because weak radically. It is true that in theology, the natural goes before the revealed, even as the cry of weakness or distress goes before the relief to which it aspires, and which it is prompted to seek after. It goes before, not synthetically in the order of demonstration, but historically in the mind of the inquirer. It is not that Natural Religion is the premises, and Christianity the conclusion; but it is that Natural Religion creates an appetite which it cannot quell; and he who is urged thereby, seeks for a rest and a satisfaction which he can only obtain in the fulness of the gospel. Natural Theology has been called the basis of Christianity. It would accord better with our own views of the place which it occupies, and of the high purpose which it undoubtedly serves—if it were called the basis of Christianization.

29. The most important exemplification of the way in which Natural Religion bears upon Christianity, is furnished by the question of a sinner's acceptance with God. Natural religion can suggest to man the apprehension of his guilt; for however dim her objective view of the Deity, there is no such dimness in her ethical notion of what is due even to an uncertain God. Without having seriously resolved the question, we may stand con-

victed to our own minds of a hardened and habitual carelessness to the question. If our whole lives long have been spent in the midst of created things, without any serious or sustained effort of our spirits in quest of a Creator—if, as our consciences can tell, the whole drift and practical earnestness of our thoughts are towards the gifts, with but a rare and occasional anxiety towards the Giver—if the sense of Him touch but lightly on our spirits, and we, by our perpetual lapses from the sacred to the secular, prove that our gravitation is to earth, and that in truth our best-loved element is atheism—if the notices of a God, however indistinct, wherewith we are surrounded, instead of fastening our regards on this high contemplation, do but disturb without at all influencing the general tenor of our engagements—these are things of which the light of Nature can take cognizance; and these are things because of which, and of their felt unworthiness, nature is visited by the misgivings both of remorse and of terror. She has data enough on which to found the demonstration and the sense of our own unworthiness; and hence a general feeling of insecurity among all spirits, a secret but strong apprehension that all is not right between them and God.

30. And without fetching the lesson of our guilt from the depths and the subtleties of our latent ungodliness, it gleams forth obviously upon us, from the palpable misdoings of outward and visible history. We do not need to dive among the arcana of our inward nature to be informed of that moral perversity which is so broadly announced by act

and by every-day behaviour. Not to speak of the frauds and profligacies of the worst in society, there is enough in the failures and the infirmities and the omissions of the best to account for that sense of sinfulness which in spite of every disguise may be detected in the purest of bosoms. The truth is, that wherever a real moral superiority of character is found, there is also a greater moral delicacy of conscience, and so a quicker sensibility to what may be deemed by many but the slighter violations of rectitude. And hence we should imagine that a sense of guilt and of deficiency is well nigh universal throughout our species. It is a felt and familiar impression every where—not the fruit of that education which prevails within the limits of Christendom, but an instant suggestion of conscience throughout all the climes of our habitable earth. Such is the experience of missionaries. They do not need to demonstrate the sinfulness of the human character—for even the dark imagery of superstition proves that the ground is thus far prepared for them. There is a certain misgiving sense of condemnation in every bosom—a distrust grounded on the fear of Heaven's provoked enmity—and the feeling of this enmity still further alienates the world from its God.*

* There is on this subject a distinction between one principle and another in Natural Theology, on which there in fact turns a corresponding distinction between one system and another in Christianity. If we hold the Supreme Being to be a God of indefinite placability, then will it be our feeling that the barrier of separation which sin hath interposed between God and His creatures, may be easily surmounted. But if, on the other hand, we hold Him to be a God of inflexible justice, then the barrier will appear to be impassable; or, at least, it will appear in our eyes a

31. This is not a matter of mere sensitive and popular impression; but in strict accordance with the views of a calm and intelligent jurisprudence. It enters into the very essence of our conception of a moral government, that it must have sanctions which could not have place, were there either to be no dispensation of rewards and punishments; or were the penalties, though denounced with all the parade and proclamation of law, to be never executed. It is not the lesson of conscience, that God would, under the mere impulse of a parental fondness for the creatures whom He had made, let down the high state and sovereignty which belong to Him; or that He would forbear the infliction of the penalty, because of any soft or timid shrinking from the pain it would give to the objects of His displeasure. There is nothing either in history or nature, which countenances such an imagination of the Deity, as that, in the relentings of mere tenderness, He would stoop to any weak or unworthy

problem of difficulty, how mercy can be so dispensed to a guilty world that the honours of the one attribute may be preserved, under the exercise and manifestation of the other. So that the question between one gospel sect or denomination and another, hangs upon an anterior question in natural theism. If we look on God only as a benign and affectionate parent, then we might imagine Him recalling His strayed children by a simple act of connivance. But if, instead of this, we look on God only as a judge and a moral governor, then might the dignity of this government seem to require that they should be irrecoverable outcasts from a kingdom whose laws they hav violated. It were altogether worthy of a revelation from Heaven, to unriddle this perplexity; and precisely as we are inclined t cherish the sentimental or the severe and sacred view of th Divinity, will either the apparatus of redemption be set at nough or will we welcome the tidings that unto us a Saviour has been born.

compromise with guilt. The actual sufferings of life speak loudly and experimentally against the supposition; and when one looks to the disease and the agony of spirit, and above all the hideous and unsparing death, with its painful struggles and gloomy forebodings, which are spread universally over the face of the earth—we cannot but imagine of the God who presides over such an economy, that He is not a being who will falter from the imposition of any severity, which might serve the objects of a high administration. Else all steadfastness of purpose and steadfastness of principle, were fallen from. God would stand forth to the eye of His own creatures, a spectacle of outraged dignity. And He of whom we image that He dwells in an inviolable sanctuary, the august Monarch of heaven and earth—with a law by subjects dishonoured, by the sovereign unavenged—would possess but the semblance and the mockery of a throne.

32. Such a conception is not only a violence to the apprehensions of nature, but is even acknowledged at times by our academic theists, as a violence to the sound philosophy of the subject. The most striking testimony to this effect is that given by Dr. Adam Smith, on the first appearance of his "Theory of Moral Sentiments;" nor does it detract from its interest or its value, that he afterwards suppressed it, in the subsequent editions of his work:—"All our natural sentiments," he says, "prompt us to believe, that as perfect virtue is supposed necessarily to appear to the Deity as it does to us, as for its own sake and without any farther view, the natural and proper object of love

and reward, so must vice of hatred and punishment. That the gods neither resent nor hurt, was the general maxim of all the different sects of the ancient philosophy; and if by resenting be understood that violent and disorderly perturbation which often distracts and confounds the human heart; or if by hurting be understood the doing of mischief wantonly, and without regard to propriety or justice, such weakness is undoubtedly unworthy of the divine perfection. But if it be meant that vice does not appear to the Deity to be for its own sake the object of abhorrence and aversion, and what, for its own sake, it is fit and reasonable should be punished, the truth of this maxim can by no means be so easily admitted. If we consult our natural sentiments, we are apt to fear lest before the holiness of God vice should appear to be more worthy of punishment, than the weakness and imperfection of human virtue can ever seem to be of reward. Man, when about to appear before a Being of infinite perfection, can feel but little confidence in his own merit, or in the imperfect propriety of his own conduct. In the presence of his fellow-creatures he may often justly elevate himself, and may often have reason to think highly of his own character and conduct, compared to the still greater imperfection of theirs. But the case is quite different, when about to appear before his infinite Creator. To such a Being, he can scarcely imagine, that his littleness and weakness should ever appear to be the proper objects either of esteem or of reward. But he can easily conceive how the numberless violations

of duty of which he has been guilty, should render him the proper object of aversion and punishment; neither can he see any reason why the divine indignation should not be let loose, without any restraint, upon so vile an insect as he is sensible that he himself must appear to be. If he would still hope for happiness, he is conscious that he cannot demand it from the justice, but he must entreat it from the mercy of God. Repentance, sorrow, humiliation, contrition at the thought of his past misconduct, are upon this account the sentiments which become him, and seem to be the only means which he has left for appeasing that wrath which he knows he has justly provoked. He even distrusts the efficacy of all these, and naturally fears lest the wisdom of God should not, like the weakness of man, be prevailed upon to spare the crime by the most importunate lamentations of the criminal. Some other intercession, some other sacrifice, some other atonement, he imagines must be made for him, beyond what he himself is capable of making, before the purity of the divine justice can be reconciled to his manifold offences. The doctrines of revelation coincide in every respect with these original anticipations of nature; and as they teach us how little we can depend upon the imperfection of our own virtue, so they show us at the same time that the most powerful intercession has been made, and that the most dreadful atonement has been paid, for our manifold transgressions and iniquities."

33. This interesting passage seems to have been written by its author, under a true apprehension

of that dilemma in which the world is involved. He admits a moral government on the part of God. He admits a universal delinquency on the part of man. And his feeling is, that the government would be nullified by a mere act of indemnity, which rendered no acknowledgment to the justice which had been violated, or to the authority of that law which had been trampled on. In these circumstances, he casts about as it were for an adjustment; and puts forth a conjectural speculation; and guesses what the provision should be, which, under a new economy, might be adopted for repairing a defect, that is evidently beyond all the resources of natural theism; and proposes the very expedient of our professed revelation, for the resolving of a difficulty which had been else impracticable. We deem it a melancholy fact, that this noble testimony to the need of a gospel should have disappeared in the posterior editions of his work—revised and corrected as they were by his own hand. It is not for men to sit in the chair of judgment; and never should they feel a greater awe or tenderness upon their spirits, than when called to witness or to pronounce upon the aberrations of departed genius. Yet when one compares the passage he could at one time have written, with the Memoir, that, after an interval of many years he gave to the world, of David Hume, that ablest champion of the infidel cause—one fears lest, under the contagion of a near and withering intimacy with him, his spirit may have imbibed of the kindred poison; and he at length have become ashamed of the homage that he once

had rendered to the worth and importance of Christianity.

34. This, notwithstanding, remains one of the finest examples of the way in which the Natural bears upon the Christian theology; and of the outgoings, by which the one conducts to a landing-place in the other. We hold that there are many such outgoings; that at the uttermost margin of the former there is a felt want, and that, in accurate counterpart to this, the latter has something to offer in precise and perfect adaptation thereto. Now the great error of our academic theism, as commonly treated, is, that it expresses no want; that it reposes in its own fancied sufficiency; and that all its landing-places are within itself, and along the uttermost limits of its own territory. It is no reproach against our philosophical moralists, that they have not stepped beyond the threshold of that peculium, which is strictly and appropriately theirs; or not made incursion into another department than their own. The legitimate complaint is, that, on taking leave of their disciples, they warn them not of their being only yet at the outset or in the prosecution of a journey, instead of having reached the termination of it. They in fact take leave of them in the middle of an unprotected highway, when they should have reared a finger-post of direction to the places which lie beyond. The paragraph which we have now extracted, was just such a finger-post—though taken down, we deeply regret to say, by the very hand that had erected it. Our veneration for his name must not restrain the observation, that, by this, he

undid the best service which a professor of moral science can render to humanity. Along the confines of its domain, there should be raised, in every quarter, the floating signals of distress; that its scholars, instead of being lulled into the imagination that now they may repose as in so many secure and splendid dwelling places, should be taught to regard them only as towers of observation—whence they have to look for their ulterior guidance and their ulterior supplies, to the region of a conterminous theology.

35. There is a difficulty here in the theism of nature, within the whole compass of which no solution for it can be found. It will at least afford a specimen of the way in which the one bears upon the other, if we state the method of escape from this difficulty that has been provided in the theism of Christianity. The great moral problem which under the former waits to be resolved, is to find acceptance in the mercy of God, for those who have braved His justice, and done despite to the authority of His law; and that, without any compromise of truth or dignity. By the offered solution of the New Testament, a channel has been opened up, through a high mediatorship between God and man, for the descent of a grace and a mercy the most exuberant on a guilty world; and through it, the overtures of reconciliation are extended unto all; and a sceptre of forgiveness, but of forgiveness consecrated by the blood of a great atonement, has been stretched forth, even to the most polluted and worthless outcasts of the human family; and thus the good-

ness of the Divinity obtained its fullest vindication, yet not a goodness at the expense of justice—for the affront done to an outraged law, has been amply repaired by the homage to its authority of an illustrious Sufferer, who took upon himself the burden of all those penalties which we should have borne; and, in the spectacle of whose deep and mysterious sacrifice, God's hatred of moral evil stands forth in most impressive demonstration. So that, instead of a conflict or a concussion between these two essential attributes of His nature, a way has been found, by which each is enhanced to the uttermost, and a flood of most copious and convincing illustration has been poured upon them both.

36. This specimen will best illustrate of moral philosophy, even in its most finished state, that it is not what may be called a terminating science. It is at best but a science *in transitu;* and its lessons are those of a preparatory school. It contains but the rudiments of a nobler acquirement; and he discharges best the functions of a teacher, not who satiates, but who excites the appetite, and then leaves it wholly unappeased. This arises from the real state and bearing of the science, as being a science not so much of doctrines as of desiderata. At most, it leaves its scholars in a sort of twilight obscurity. And, if a just account is rendered of the subject, there will unavoidably be the feeling, that, instead of having reached a secure landing-place, we have broken off, as in the middle of an unfinished demonstration.

37. That indeed is a most interesting adjustment

between Moral Philosophy and the Christian Theology, which is represented to us by the unresolved difficulties of the one science, and the reduction which is made of these difficulties in the other. We have far the most important example of this in the doctrine of the atonement—that sublime mystery, by which the attributes of the Divinity have all been harmonized; and the most liberal outlet has been provided for mercy to the offender, while still the truth and justice of the Lawgiver have been vindicated, and all the securities of His moral government are upholden. By the disloyalty of our race, the principles of Heaven's jurisprudence are brought to a test of utmost delicacy; for there seems to be no other alternative, than that man should perish in overwhelming vengeance, or that God should become a degraded sovereign. It nullifies the moral government of the world, if all force and authority be taken from its sanctions; and it is a problem which even "angels desired to look into," how the breach could be healed, which had been made by this world's rebellion, and yet the honour of heaven's high Sovereign be untarnished by the compromise. The one science lands us in the difficulty; and by the other alone it is that we are extricated. The one presents us with the case; but, for the solution of it, we must recur to a higher calculus, to an instrument of more powerful discovery and of fuller revelation. The one starts a question which itself cannot untie; and the other furnishes the satisfactory response to it. The desideratum of the former meets with the doctrine of the latter; and it is this frequent

adjustment, as of a mould to its counterpart die; it is this close and manifold adaptation between the wants of nature and the overtures of a professed revelation; it is this fitting of the supernal application to the terrestrial subject upon which it is laid; it is the way, more especially, in which the disruption between heaven and earth has been restored, and the frightful chasm that sin had made on the condition and prospects of our species is wholly repaired to all who will through the completeness of an offered Saviour; it is this mingled harmony of the greater and lesser lights, which gives evidence that both have been kindled by the same hand, and that it is He who put the candle which glimmers so feebly into my heart, it is He also who poured the noonday effulgence of Christianity around me.

(37.) It were foreign to our present subject to attempt an exposition, in however brief and rapid a sketch, of the credentials of Christianity. We only remark, that, amid the lustre and variety of its proofs, there is one strikingly analogous, and indeed identical in principle with one of the main arguments in Natural Theology. If in the system of external nature we can recognise the evidence of God being its author, in the adaptations wherewith it teems to the Moral and Intellectual Constitution of Man—there is room and opportunity for this very evidence in the book of an external revelation. What appears in the construction of a world might be made to appear as manifestly in the construction of a volume, whose objective truths may present as obvious and skilful an

accommodation to our mental economy, as do the objective things of a created universe. And it is not the less favourable, for an indication of its divine original, that whereas Nature, as being the original system, abounds with those fitnesses which harmonize with the mental constitution in a state of health—Christianity, as being a restorative system, abounds in fitnesses to the same constitution in a state of disease. We are not sure but that in the latter, from its very design, we shall meet with still more delicate and decisive tests of a designer, than have yet been noticed in the former; and certain it is, that the wisdom and goodness and even power of a moral architect, may be as strikingly evinced in the reparation, as in the primary establishment of a Moral Nature.

38. Our conclusion on the whole is that no alleged defect of evidence in Natural Theology can extinguish the use of it—a use which might still remain, under every conceivable degree whether of dimness or of distinctness in its views. Even the faint and distant probabilities of the subject, may still lay upon us the duty of careful and strenuous inquisition; and that, long anterior to our full acquaintance with the certainties of the subject. The verisimilitudes of the question are the signal posts, by following the intimations of which, we are at length conducted to the verities of the question. Although Natural Theology, therefore, should fail to illuminate, yet, by a moral force upon the attention, it may fully retain the power to impel. Even if it should have but some evidence, however slender, this should put us at

the very least into the attitude of inquirers; and the larger the evidence, the more earnest and vigilant ought the inquiry to be. Thus a great object is practically fulfilled by Natural Theology. It gives us to conceive, or to conjecture, or to know so much of God, that, if there be a professed message with the likely signatures upon it of having proceeded from Him—though not our duty all at once to surrender, it is at least our bounden duty to investigate. It may not yet be entitled to a place in our creed; but it is at least entitled to a place in the threshold of the understanding—where it may wait the full and fair examination of its credentials. It may not be easy to measure the intensity of Nature's light; but enough if it be a light that, had we obeyed its intimations, would have guided us onwards to larger manifestations of the Deity. If Natural Theology but serve thus to fix and direct our inquiries, it may fulfil a most important part as the precursor of revelation. It may not be itself the temple; but it does much by leading the way to it. Even at the outset period of our thickest ignorance, there is a voice which calls upon us to go forth in quest of God. And in proportion as we advance does the voice become more urgent and audible, in calling us onward to further manifestations. It says much for Natural Theology, that it begins at the commencement, and carries us forward a part of this way; and it has indeed discharged a most important function, if, at the point where its guesses or its discoveries terminate, it leaves us with as much light as should make us all awake to the further notices of a God,

or as shall leave our heedlessness wholly inexcusable.

39. There is a confused imagination with many, that every new accession, whether of evidence or of doctrine, made to the Natural, tends in so far to reduce the claims or to depreciate the importance of the Christian Theology. The apprehension is, that, as the latter was designed to supplement the insufficiency of the former,—then, the more that the arguments of Natural Theology are strengthened, or its truths are multiplied, the more are the lessons of the Christian Theology unneeded and uncalled for. It is thus that the discoveries of reason are held as superseding, or as casting a shade of insignificance, and even of discredit, over the discoveries of revelation. There is a certain dread or jealousy, with some humble Christians, of all that incense which is offered at the shrine of the Divinity by human science—whose daring incursion on the field of theology, it is thought, will, in very proportion to the brilliancy of its success, administer both to the proud independence of the infidel, and to the pious alarm of the believer.

40. But, to mitigate this disquietude, it should be recollected, in the first place, that, if Christianity have real and independent evidence of being a message from God, it will be all the more humbly and respectfully deferred to, should a previous natural theology have assured us of His existence, and thrown the radiance of a clear and satisfying demonstration over the perfections of His character. However plausible its credentials may be, we should

feel no great interest in its statements or its overtures, if we doubted the reality of that Being from whom it professes to have come; and it is precisely in as far as we are preoccupied with the conviction of a throne in heaven, and of a God sitting upon that throne, that we should receive what bore the signatures of an embassy from Him with awful reverence.

41. But there is another consideration still more decisive of the place and importance of Christianity, notwithstanding every possible achievement by the light of nature. There are many discoveries which, so far from alleviating, serve but to enhance the difficulties of the question. For example, though science has made known to us the magnitude of the universe, it has not thereby advanced one footstep towards the secret of God's moral administration; but has, in fact, receded to a greater distance, from this now more hopeless, because now more complex and unmanageable problem than before. To multiply the data of a question, is not always the way to facilitate its solution; but often the way, rather, to make it more inextricable. And this is precisely the effect of all the discoveries that can be made by Natural Theology, on that problem which it is the special office of Christianity to resolve. With every new argument by which philosophy enhances the goodness and greatness of the Supreme Being, does it deepen still more the guilt and ingratitude of those who have revolted against Him. The more emphatically it can demonstrate the care and benevolence of God—the more emphatically, along with

this, does it demonstrate the worthlessness of man. The same light which irradiates the perfections of the divine nature, irradiates, with more fearful manifestation than ever, the moral disease and depravation into which humanity has fallen. Had natural theology been altogether extinct, and there had been no sense of a law or lawgiver among men, we should have been unconscious of any difficulty to be redressed, of any dilemma from which we needed extrication. But the theology of nature and conscience tells us of a law; and in proportion as it multiplies the claims of the Lawgiver in heaven, does it aggravate the criminality of His subjects upon earth. With the rebellious phenomenon of a depraved species before our eyes, every new discovery of God but deepens the enigma of man's condition in time, and of his prospects in eternity; and so makes the louder call for that remedial system, which it is the very purpose of Christianity to introduce into the world.

42. We hold that the theology of nature sheds powerful light on the being of a God; and that, even from its unaided demonstrations, we can reach a considerable degree of probability, both for His moral and natural attributes. But when it undertakes the question between God and man, this is what it finds to be impracticable. It is here where the main helplessness of nature lies. It is baffled in all its attempts to decipher the state and the prospects of man, viewed in the relation of an offending subject to an offended sovereign. In a word, its chief obscurity, and which it is wholly unable to disperse, is that which rests on the hopes and the destiny of our

species. There is in it enough of manifestation to awaken the fears of guilt, but not enough again to appease them. It emits, and audibly emits, a note of terror; but in vain do we listen for one authentic word of comfort from any of its oracles. It is able to see the danger, but not the deliverance. It can excite the forebodings of the human spirit, but cannot quell them—knowing just enough to stir the perplexity, but not enough to set the perplexity at rest. It can state the difficulty, but cannot unriddle the difficulty—having just as much knowledge as to enunciate the problem, but not so much as might lead to the solution of the problem. There must be a measure of light, we do allow; but, like the lurid gleam of a volcano, it is not a light which guides, but which bewilders and terrifies. It prompts the question, but cannot frame or furnish the reply. Natural theology may see as much as shall draw forth the anxious interrogation, "What shall I do to be saved?" The answer to this comes from a higher theology.

43. These are the grounds on which we would affirm the insufficiency of that academic theism, which is sometimes set forth in such an aspect of completeness and certainty, as might seem to leave a revelation or a gospel wholly uncalled for. Many there are who would gloss over the difficulties of the question; and who, in the midst of all that undoubted outrage which has been inflicted by sinful creatures on the truth and the holiness and the justice of God, would, by merging all the attributes of the Divinity into a placid and undistinguishing tenderness, still keep their resolute

hold of heaven, as at least the splendid imagination, by which to irradiate the destinies of our species. It is thus that an airy unsupported romance has been held forth as the vehicle, on which to embark all the hopes and the hazards of eternity. We would not disguise the meagreness of such a system. We would not deliver the lessons of natural theology, without telling at the same time of its limits. We abjure the cruelty of that sentimentalism, which, to hush the alarms of guilty man, would rob the Deity of his perfections, and stamp a degrading mockery upon His law. When expounding the arguments of natural theology, along with the doctrines which it dimly shadows forth, we must speak of the difficulties which itself suggests but which it cannot dispose of; we must make mention of the obscurities into which it runs, but which it is unable to dissipate—of its unresolved doubts—of the mysteries through which it vainly tries to grope its uncertain way—of its weary and fruitless efforts—of its unutterable longings. And should, on the one hand, the speculations of human ingenuity, and, on the other, the certainties of a well accredited revelation, come forth to illuminate this scene of darkness—we must not so idolize the light or the sufficiency of nature, as to turn from the firmament's meridian blaze, that we might witness and admire the tiny lustre of a glow-worm.

44. The two positions are perfectly reconcilable—first, of the insufficiency of natural religion; and secondly, the great actual importance of it. It is the wise and profound saying of D'Alembert, that

"man has too little sagacity to resolve an infinity of questions, which he has yet sagacity enough to make." Now this marks the degree in which Natural Theology is sagacious—being able, from its own resources, to construct a number of cases, which at the same time it is not able to reduce. These must be handed up for solution to a higher calculus; and thus it is, that the theology of nature and of the schools, the theology of the ethical class—though most unsatisfactory, when treated as a terminating science—is most important, and the germ of developments at once precious and delightful, when treated as a rudimental one. It is a science, not so much of dicta as of desiderata; and, from the way in which these are met by the counterpart doctrines of the gospel, the light of a powerful and most pleasing evidence is struck out by the comparison between them. It is that species of evidence which arises from the adaptation of a mould to its counterpart form; for there is precisely this sort of fitting, in the adjustment which obtains between the questions of the natural and the responses of the supernatural theology. For the problem which natural theology cannot resolve, the precise difficulty which it is wholly unable to meet or to overcome, is the restoration of sinners to acceptance and favour with a God of justice. All the resources and expedients of natural theology are incompetent for this solution—it being, in fact, the great desideratum which it cannot satisfy. Still it performs an important part in making us sensible of the desideratum. It makes known to us our sin; but it cannot make known to us salvation. Let us

not overlook the importance of that which it does, in its utter helplessness as to that which it does not. It puts the question, though it cannot answer the question, and nowhere so much as at this turning point, are both the uses and the defects of natural theology so conspicuously blended.

END OF VOLUME SECOND.

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